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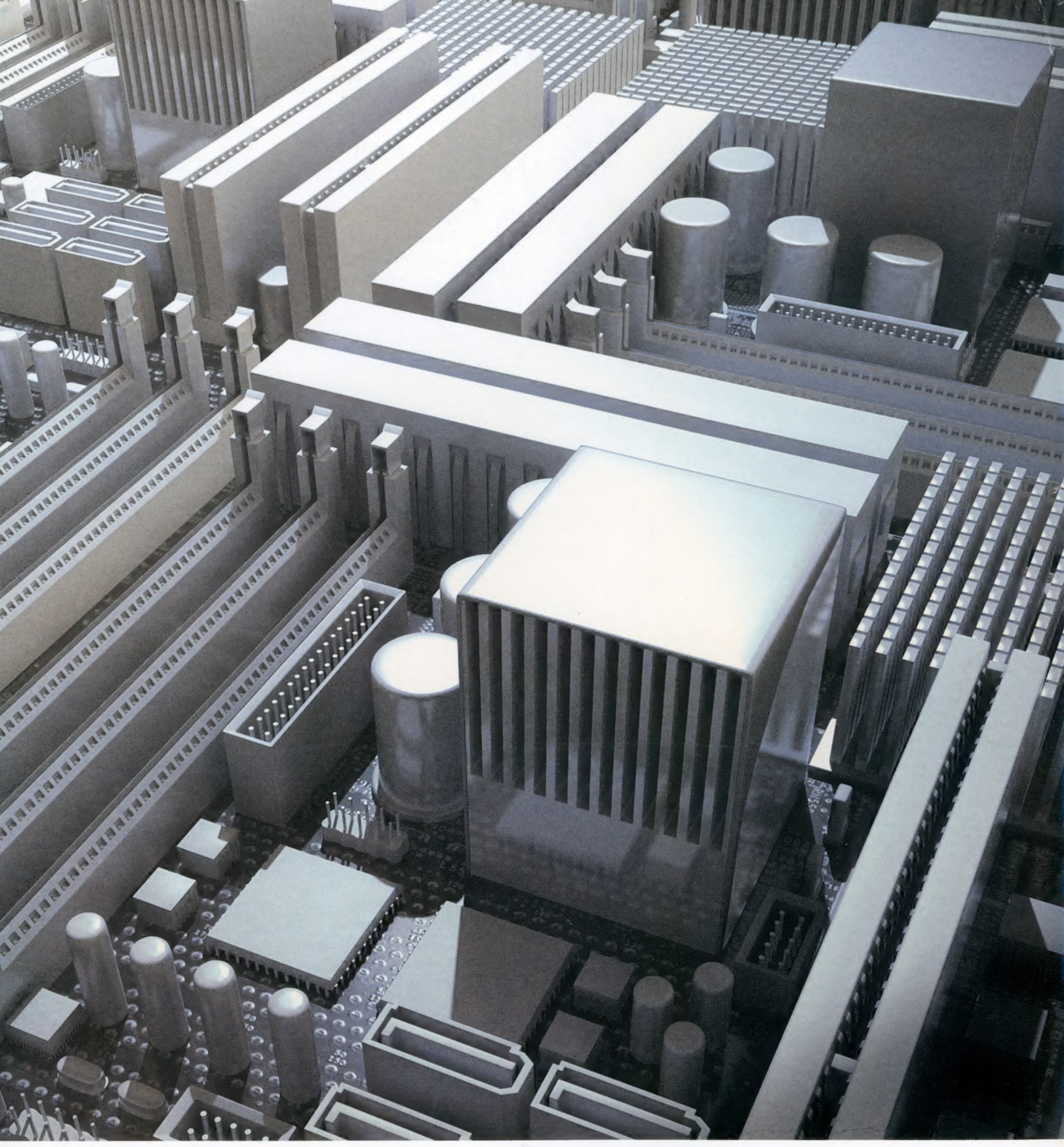

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BEST BITS!

Just some of the stand-out stuff this month in the UK's number one games mag!

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

P62 Finally, after all the speculation and the delays, getting to sit in front of *Grand Theft Auto IV* and allowing yourself to soak it in, not rushing around but just pausing for thought, admiring the detail in Niko's appearance, listening to the ambient sound of Liberty City, watching the citizens of Liberty City go about their business, is brilliant stuff. While *GTA* can match any game in terms of the spectacular it's the difference in the detail that makes it truly special.

WELCOME TO GAMESMASTER

We'd normally welcome you with a handshake and an "alright?" but this issue no one turns the page without a high five – slap! We've got Indiana Jones pursued by a Lego boulder (p18)! Broken a world record (p16)! Been to WrestleMania and got threatened by a WWE Superstar! (p54) Best of all though, we've played and finished GTA IV (p62) and it's so good that it makes us *proud* to be gamers.

And then there's that issue number – 199. This time next month we'll be 200 and you're all invited to the celebrations. There's still time to vote for your greatest game and character of all time. The results are running really close – barely 10 minutes go by in the office without someone opening a form or an email and reading out the results. There's still time to have your say but you need to be quick (p46). It's time to have your say about the mag too. Fill in the reader survey that comes with this issue or go to www.gamesurvey.co.uk (password: BG2) and help us make *GamesMaster* better. It's the best way to tell us what you do and don't like about that mag and you could scoop a massive telly too. Do it now and enjoy your *GM*!

Robin

Robin, The Ed

SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2009

P54 Co-operative play is so important in today's games, so it's great to see that it's being properly exploited in *SmackDown* with the introduction of proper Tag Team moves.

LEGO INDY

P18 Indiana Jones has his hands on the golden idol. He stands there in awe of its beauty and his own skill in replacing the ancient artefact with a stack of Lego studs as a counterweight. Suddenly our hero's face drops as the stone temple starts to shake and a giant Lego boulder tumbles down towards him. So begins a frantic race to safety and sound proof that Traveller's Tales have worked their Lego magic once again, this time with Indiana Jones.

SELECT YOUR MODE

GAMES MASTER

THE MASTER OF GAMES SINCE 1993

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The wait is over – here's the *GM* verdict...

WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2009 ..... PAGE 54
GM goes mental at WresteMania 24!

LEGO INDIANA JONES ..... PAGE 18
We relive Indy's greatest adventures Lego style!

100% NEW!

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As *GTA* returns so does *Saints Row*. 036

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062 It's judgement time for the biggest game of the year!

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Ruyu gets choppy on the DS in *Ninja Gaiden Dragon Sword*. 073

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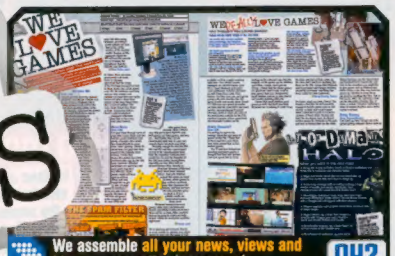
WE LOVE GAMES



We assemble all your news, views and ideas... no matter how crazy! 042

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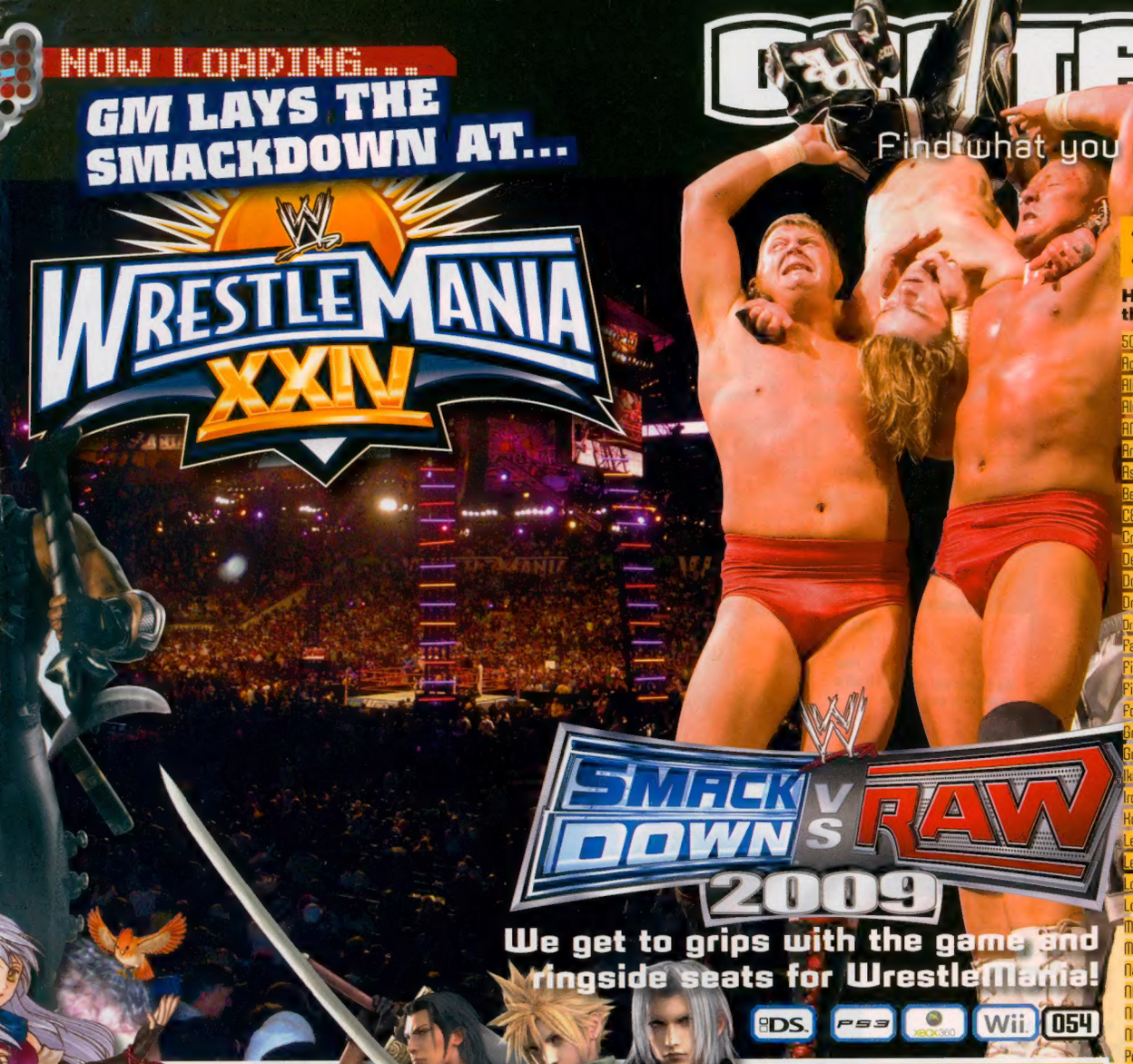

We get to grips with the game and ringside seats for WrestleMania!

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Get ready for your next court appearance in *NBA Ballers!* 072

Return to the universe of the PS1 FF classic in *Final Fantasy 7: Crisis Core!* 066

Amaze others and become a master of illusion with *Magic Made Fun.* 070

Get the verdict on the explosive RTS *Universe at War: Earth Assault.* 078

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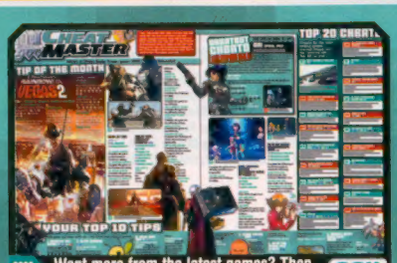

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grand theft auto IV

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WIN A Wii AND A COPY OF Wii FIT! 096

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Find what you need in an instant!

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TEAM GM

Please note that *Team GM* are against organised crime – they prefer more casual...

ROBIN

DOCTOR WHO?

'Of course Indiana Jones is often called Dr Jones, but you must remember he isn't a real medical doctor. Just like Dr Fox, who's not a real fox.'

FAVOURITE GAME: GTA IV
FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO IN *GTA*: I'll check out the radio stations so I know just what to listen to when doing the missions.
FILM THAT SHOULD GET THE LEGO TREATMENT: Mike Leigh's *Naked*

DAVE

DOGSBODY

FAVOURITE GAME: *GTA IV*
FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO IN *GTA*: Go to the pub and play darts.
FILM THAT SHOULD GET THE LEGO TREATMENT: *Con Air*

Dave is worried that his dog seems to like him more than his girlfriend. Whenever he lets his dog out of the car boot he always wags his tail. But when he lets his girlfriend out of the boot she just glares at him.

SHAUN

FAVOURITE GAME: *GTA IV*
FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO IN *GTA*: Find the fastest car and take it off a building or over a lake.
FILM THAT SHOULD GET THE LEGO TREATMENT: *The Matrix*

MINDLESS

Shaun is still talking about the forthcoming Jason Bourne game because he can really relate to the character as he too has had amnesia. Well he thinks he has but he can't quite remember.

GREG

SLEEPY HEAD

FAVOURITE GAME: *Haze*
FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO IN *GTA*: Check out the multiplayer options... and try to find a friend...
FILM THAT SHOULD GET THE LEGO TREATMENT: The 1980s Damien the *Omen* saga.

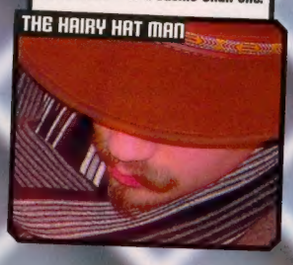
After following Niko's story in *GTA* Greg has decided to follow his dreams and make them reality. Which might explain why he turned up naked at work.

ADAM

FAVOURITE GAME: Super Smash Bros Brawl
FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO IN *GTA*: Join an in-game library and borrow some nice books.
FILM THAT SHOULD GET THE LEGO TREATMENT: The Bond films – or a Jackie Chan one.

Playing *GTA* Adam has learnt that money talks. And it usually says 'goodbye'.

THE HAIRY HAT MAN



KATH

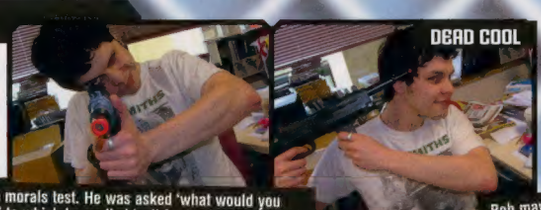
FAVOURITE GAME: *GTA IV*
FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO IN *GTA*: Jump in a car and go on a five star killing spree.
FILM THAT SHOULD GET THE LEGO TREATMENT: *Bridget Jones's Diary*

JAIL BIRD

After playing *GTA IV* Kath has gone on a crime spree, including theft of a toilet seat from a police station. She got away with that one as the cops had nothing to go on.

RORY

FAVOURITE GAME: *FF7 Crisis Core*
FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO IN *GTA*: Go to a bar and play darts.
FILM THAT SHOULD GET THE LEGO TREATMENT: George Romero's *Dead* trilogy.



DEAD COOL

Rory tried out for the police but failed the morals test. He was asked 'what would you do if you had to arrest your own mother?' to which he replied 'call for back up'.

ROB

BATTY

FAVOURITE GAME: *God of War: Chains of Olympus*
FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO IN *GTA*: Rock out to some Euro pop on Vladivostok FM.
FILM THAT SHOULD GET THE LEGO TREATMENT: *Alien*

Rob may be into wrestling and mindless violence but he would never hit a man with glasses. He prefers to use a cricket bat.

JOEL

THE SMALL ONE

FAVOURITE GAME: *GTA IV*
FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO IN *GTA*: Get drunk.
FILM THAT SHOULD GET THE LEGO TREATMENT: *Deliverance*

Joel was in Miami interviewing a WWE superstar who asked him if he often used his dictaphone. Joel said no, he uses a mobile like everyone else and told him not to be so personal.

GERAINT

FAVOURITE GAME: Ninja Gaiden 2
FIRST THING YOU'RE GOING TO DO IN *GTA*: Form the biggest pile up of cars possible then blow them up with a rocket launcher.
FILM THAT SHOULD GET THE LEGO TREATMENT: Star Trek

JOBSWORTH

Playing *GTA* Geraint has learnt that crime doesn't pay and by that reckoning he's figured out that his day job is a crime.

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Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).

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100% NEW!

Scorching hot games news...

BBC ON Wii

Nintendo and the BBC have signed a deal that will allow Wii owners to use the Beeb's iPlayer service to catch up on TV shows such as *Doctor Who* and *Eastenders* free of charge. The service is available now and is accessible through the Wii's Internet Channel, which costs just 500 Wii Points (£3.50).

Sonic risks getting sand in his shoes in this dusty desert locale.

SONIC RETURNS!

This environment recalls the Arabian Nights theme of the Wii's *Sonic and the Secret Rings*.

A Sonic game that revels in its 2D roots!

Sega have officially announced a new adventure for their speedy blue mascot entitled *Sonic Unleashed*. It could finally see the spiky fella's recent run of flops become a distant memory.

Sega are promising a new gameplay element that involves night time scenes that will allow players to experience a 'new way to play Sonic'. Sharp-eyed readers may already have noticed the feral-looking beast dubbed Were-Sonic (pictured below) – could our hero have contracted a nasty case of lycanthropy?

The game's plot will see Dr Eggman fracturing the globe into seven pieces as Sonic, (and rumour has it, Knuckles and Tails) travel from continent to continent to retrieve the chaos emeralds and save the world. Other new features being touted are 'combat fighting' and four new modes that will really put Sonic's speedy skills to the test.

Among the various snippets Sega have released is a 2.5D gameplay movie indicating a return to the hero's super fast, side-on, Sega Mega Drive roots. A Sega spokesperson revealed that the new game was an attempt to rebuild the Sonic brand that would unite developers in Japan, America and Europe and "prove that it [Sonic] could work in 3D environments". Developers Sonic Team have built the game around their new Hedgehog Engine which allows the camera to switch seamlessly between 2D and 3D perspectives and helps to create the game's rich visual style.

Sonic Unleashed will be available for Wii, 360, PS3, PS2 but it doesn't have a release date yet.

The characters and environments are looking pretty polished already.

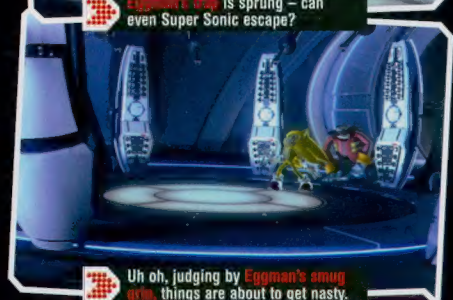
Environments feature gadgets such as boost pads and flippers.

This woodland world features massive sweeping loops.

Down but not out – Sonic finds himself in Eggman's lab.

Flaming hell – Super Sonic is unleashed. Watch out!

Eggman's trap is sprung – can even Super Sonic escape?



Uh oh, judging by Eggman's smug grin, things are about to get nasty.

It looks as though Sonic can now dodge out of the way of obstacles.

Eggman's sinister army of robot drones look lethal. Yikes!

ARRROOOOOO!

The Were-hog, or Wolf-Sonic if you prefer, is an interesting new addition to the series that will change the way the game is played. Unleashed by an experiment gone wrong, Sonic's feral side comes into play at night. The beast's increased size will mean the action slows up considerably, but his long arms and immense strength mean he can grapple with enemies and shift chunks of scenery with ease.

POWER PILLS

Japanese gamers can now buy a new range of pills called Power Supple to help keep themselves healthy while playing. The new supplements come in two varieties – a chewy blueberry capsule that helps eyes deal with the stress of staring at a screen for hours on end, and a pill containing Omega 3 to aid brain trainers. As yet there are no plans to release the modern day power pills over here.

WII NOT SO FIT?

The Wii's keep fit credentials have been struck a blow by research carried out by Southampton University that suggests the Nintendo console is less effective fighting the flab than 360 and PS3. The results aren't all that surprising considering that those tested were following the new Gamercize fitness program, which involves the use of a stair-climbing exercise machine while playing. The research also showed that *Call of Duty 4* was the most effective fat-burning game.

GAMING: THE LAW!

What the Byron Review will mean for you...

Everybody's been talking about Dr Tanya Byron's investigation of videogames, but who is she, what were the review's findings and how will it affect the way we buy games?

The Byron Review, the result of a year long investigation undertaken by child psychologist Dr Tanya Byron, was commissioned by the government and investigated the potential risks to children who play videogames and use the internet. The report has resulted in a change in the law which will make game ratings clearer and increase everybody's awareness of the content of games. This will make it more difficult for mature games to end up in the hands of youngsters, but it could also see less controversial games receiving higher age ratings preventing you from playing them.

Below we explore what will change, who will change it, what the experts think and how it will affect you.

THE FACTS

- The BBFC will now rate games 12, 15 and 18 by law
- PEGI will continue to rate games for the under 12s
- All games will carry a BBFC rating on the front of the box
- PEGI game descriptions will be on the back of every game box
- Online gaming and aspects of the internet will be monitored by a new body chaired by various government departments

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WHAT IS THE BBFC?

THE BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CLASSIFICATION

- It's an independent body which began rating films in 1912 and now rates DVDs and games too
- It is illegal for under-aged gamers to buy games rated 12, 15 or 18
- The BBFC look at the following when rating games: theme, bad language, sexual content, violence, horror, drugs references and imitable techniques
- Unlike PEGI the BBFC can refuse to allow a game to be released if they feel it could be harmful

WHAT IS PEGI?

PAN EUROPEAN GAME INFORMATION

- PEGI is an age rating system set up in 2003 to help European parents decide which games are suitable for their children
- It is a voluntary system that developers don't have to sign up to, though almost all have
- PEGI's ratings are 3+, 7+, 12+, 16+ and 18+
- PEGI also use symbols to describe a game's content. These include: bad language, discrimination, drugs, fear, sex, violence and gambling
- PEGI ratings are intended as a guideline, however they do not carry the legal restrictions of the BBFC ratings that Dr Byron has called for

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

- David Cooke, director of the BBFC: "We are ready and able to take on the extra work envisioned by Dr Byron"
- Paul Jackson, director general of the Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association: "We are concerned that the proposals as they stand may struggle to keep up with the public's increasing desire to buy and play online"
- Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families: "Dr Byron's recommendations will help parents to recognise risks and judge what is appropriate"
- Jeremy Hunt, Shadow Culture Secretary: "This is a missed opportunity and one that risks leading to greater confusion for parents and industry"

WHO IS DR TANYA BYRON?

- Dr Tanya Byron is a qualified psychologist who rose to fame in 2004 as the resident expert on BBC3 parenting shows *The House of Tiny Tearaways* and *Little Angels*
- She has also written three books on child behaviour and writes a weekly column for *The Times* newspaper
- Recently she teamed up with comedian Jennifer Saunders to write talk show sitcom *The Life and Times of Vivienne Vyle*
- In 2007 she was asked by the government to head up an independent review investigating the possible harmful effects of the internet and videogames on children, AKA The Byron Review.

GM SAYS

The Byron Review won't actually change very much, but it will increase the public's knowledge about the content of videogames and how those games are rated. With an awareness campaign on the way this should put a stop to the mainstream press (a) dismissing all videogames as toys and (b) blaming our beloved pastime for all of society's ills. Now if everyone takes notice of the symbols we should be fine!

DS2: THE RUMOURS START HERE!

Are Ninty planning another re-design, complete overhaul or nothing at all?

A man in Japan has made a startling prediction: that Nintendo will use the E3 games show to announce a next-generation DS. The claim's been made by Hirokazu Hamamura, head of Enterbrain (the parent company of esteemed Japanese gaming magazine *Famitsu*) – a respected figure within the gaming industry, which leads us to believe we could be just months away from another no doubt revolutionary piece of Nintendo kit. After all, DS Lite has been around for two years now – so is it time for the DS 'UltraLite'?

What we might see from a new DS

- The loss of the GBA ports to make it thinner and lighter
- Larger screens
- Louder, better quality speakers
- Better wireless technology
- Flash capability
- Two touch-screens, including buttons and D-pad
- Sturdier hinges
- Greater piracy protection
- Tilt or motion sensing
- Increased DS and Wii connectivity

A couple of concept DS designs dreamt up by fans on the internet.

NEW STUFF

WII CAN BE FREE

Zappies have created a device that allows you to use the Wii-mote and nunchuck without a wire connecting them together. The Nunchuck Wireless Kit consists of a wireless receiver that snaps to the bottom of the Wii-mote, while the nunchuck sits in a wireless housing for 20 hours of use, which makes the controls chunkier. (£19.99, www.zappies.com)

CHAIR ENOUGH

Renegade claim that this is the 'ultimate gaming chair'. At £225, it's pretty expensive, but for that cash you get motors that shake and rumble in time with the gaming action (or can be set to a constant 'massage'), to listen to 3D sound from the in-built speakers, or simply recline back and place your drink in the beverage holder. It can be hooked up to all consoles, as well as steering wheels and MP3 players. (£225, www.ultimategamechair.com)

GOING MAVERICK!

CLANCY CAPTURED! Ubisoft and Tom Clancy, as you know, are pretty good buddies. So good, in fact, that Ubisoft bought him! Well, not him exactly. They actually now own the licence to create Clancy-branded products. The first after the purchase is Tom Clancy's *HAWX* – a move away from the usual Rainbow Six/Ghost Recon style and into the air! (360, PS3, PC out in autumn)

WOAH! *HAWX* (which stands for High-Altitude Warfare X) is set in 2012, where private military companies have been employed in the fight for freedom across the skies. You'll be able to pilot 50 different fighter jets, which come equipped with a high-tech Enhanced Reality System (ERS) that allows you to detect incoming missiles, your wingman and tactical information.

WING IT! Although you can have AI wingmen, *HAWX* will also offer four-player co-op or 16-player versus modes across glorious-looking landscapes such as this – you can even make out the lines on the football pitch from here. Now imagine what it will look like once it's all covered in bombs and tanks, with heroic dogfights above it!

BADA BING!

GREEN M

BIG SHOTS

The coolest shots from the hottest new games

Once again, we give you the chance to wrap your eyes around two pages of some of the most explosive and action-packed images from the most exciting new titles on the horizon. Check 'em out!

THE APPRENTICE!

Much has been made of *Star Wars: Force Unleashed* (all formats, out: September) and there are plenty of reasons to get excited. Set between Episodes 3 and 4, you play the part of Darth Vader's secret apprentice on a mission to wipe out the last remaining Jedi using awesome force powers (which incorporate LucasArt's impressive physics and animation engines). It'll also feature unique features for each format, such as Wii-mote lightsaber action!

CREATURE FEATURES!

It'll take more than a can of bug spray to dispatch these creatures – they're deadly! *Deadly Creatures* (Wii, release: TBC) apparently takes its inspiration from a little-known PC cockroach-'em-up game called *Bad Mojo*. All we know is that the Wii-mote can be flicked around to attack with your scorpion tail, that your big insect can climb walls and there's blood. Lots of green blood.

NEED MORE INPUT!

Cleaning robot *Wall•E* (short for Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth-Class) finds he is the last 'living' thing left on the planet in Disney Pixar's latest animated blockbuster. THQ have been tasked with the job of publishing the spin-off adventure game (all formats, release: summer).

TAKE-TWO OFFER

Take-Two, publishers of the phenomenally successful *GTA* series, have rejected EA's $2 billion bid to buy them out. Boss Strauss Zelnick reckoned the offer was "opportunistic" but pointed out that they are working in tandem with EA and even open to third-party buyers. Meanwhile the publishers have posted the idea of a massively multiplayer online game and a movie based on the award-winning first-person shooter, *BioShock*.

ROCK BAND RIP-OFF

EA and Harmonix have annoyed gamers with their European pricing for *Rock Band*. Over in the US, it retails at $170 (about £86), a price which includes the guitar, drum kit, guitar and microphone. However, despite arriving six months after the US game, EA have announced that *Rock Band* will be sold in two halves: the 'Instrument Pack' (a mic, guitar and drum kit) that will cost £130 and the game, which should retail at £40, meaning a full set of gear and

Gas Powered Games will be well known to RTS fans for the technically excellent *Supreme Commander*. So, RTS/RPG/action game *Demigod* (PC, release TBC) is something to get very excited about. Not only does it look fantastic, the first details about the game suggest that you'll be controlling single units called Lesser Deities. *Demigod* also promises to be a multiplayer game with emphasis on co-operative play.

Fans of *The Godfather* trilogy and *The Sopranos* disappointed by *GTA IV*'s modern setting will be pleased to hear that 2K games are working on *Mafia 2* (360, PS3, PC, release TBC). Set in the '40s and '50s and drawing on some of the greatest films and TV shows ever made for inspiration, it positively oozes with atmosphere!

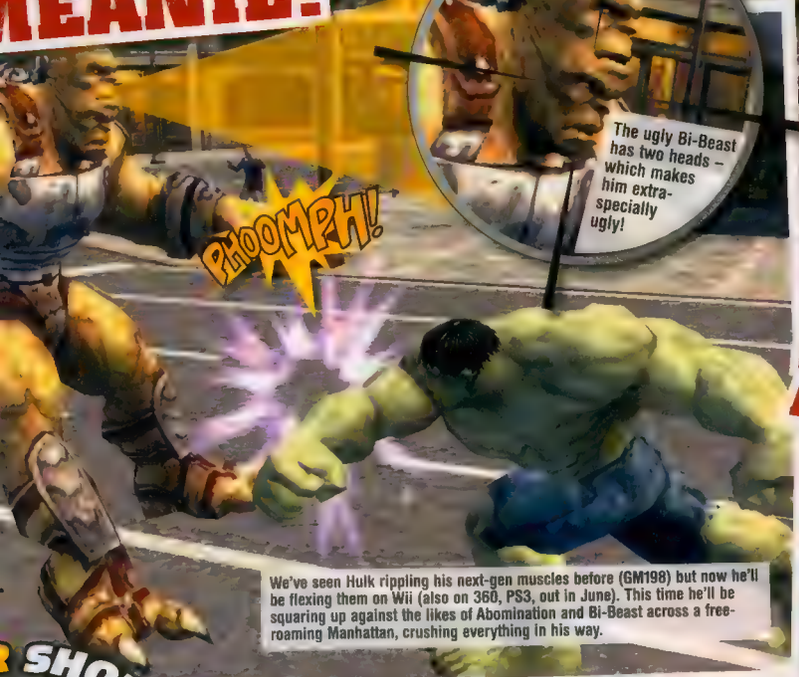
MEANIE!

GODS OF WAR VS EMPEROR'S WARRIORS

THQ's *Dawn of War* gave both fans of Warhammer 40k and RTS titles a taste of quality strategy and now *Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War 2* (PC, out spring 2009) could take the epic battles between Orks and Space Marines to an even greater level.

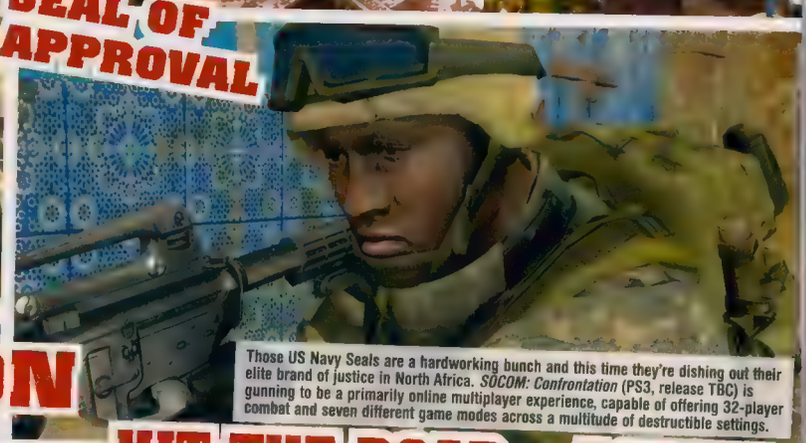
SNIPER SHOT

The ugly Bi-Beast has two heads – which makes him extra-specially ugly!



We've seen Hulk rippling his next-gen muscles before (GM198) but now he'll be flexing them on Wii (also on 360, PS3, out in June). This time he'll be squaring up against the likes of Abomination and Bi-Beast across a free-roaming Manhattan, crushing everything in his way.

SEAL OF APPROVAL



Those US Navy Seals are a hardworking bunch and this time they're dishing out their elite brand of justice in North Africa. *SOCOM: Confrontation* (PS3, release TBC) is gunning to be a primarily online multiplayer experience, capable of offering 32-player combat and seven different game modes across a multitude of destructible settings.

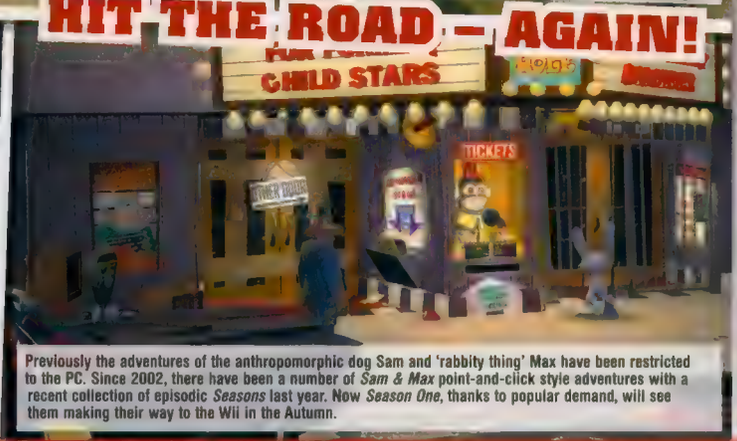
R SHOT

Anyone else here remember Johnny 5 from '80s film *Short Circuit*? No, just us then...

REICH ON TIME!

WW2 games are largely told from the allies' perspective as they bravely wage war against the Nazis. But *Saboteur* (360, release TBC) sees you take on the role of one man with a grudge as you sneak your way to bloody revenge in dramatic monochrome hues.

HIT THE ROAD – AGAIN!



Previously the adventures of the anthropomorphic dog Sam and 'rabbity thing' Max have been restricted to the PC. Since 2002, there have been a number of *Sam & Max* point-and-click style adventures with a recent collection of episodic *Seasons* last year. Now *Season One*, thanks to popular demand, will see them making their way to the Wii in the Autumn.

100% NEW!

HALO PENNED

Screenwriter Stuart Beattie has written a script for a Halo movie in the hope of finally getting the long rumoured project off the ground. Beattie, whose previous credits include *Pirates of the Caribbean*, penned the draft without studio backing and is now trying to attract Hollywood interest. Big names previously attached to the project include Peter Jackson and Alex Garland.

ROCK ON

Activision are giving fans of *Guitar Hero* the chance to appear as a playable character in the next game in the series. Players are invited to download a clip of themselves rocking out with anything from a guitar to a tennis racket at releaseyourrockstar.com. The clips will be rated by Lemmy, hellraiser and lead singer of Motörhead.

APRIL FOOLS' ROUND-UP

Each April Fools' Day gamers across the globe voted themselves as serious as the penny dropped and that hot gossip in the know news story turned out to be, well, too good to be true. Sincere ahead of anything we could ever produce in earnest up with a plastic dog turd, here are the best of this year's jests in full...

MICROSOFT

Microsoft unveiled a series of space peripherals and accessories designed to modernise gamers' driving. The wobbly emerges were a wireless helmet complete with boogie-mounted rumble feature and a first glance wasn't an attractive would pumpkin Vintage Edition 360 and an Xbox Live head gear.

Curse you Microsoft for getting our hopes up with this one!

IGN

Online gaming site IGN unveiled an exclusive trailer for the long-awaited Zelda movie. It featured a cast of unknown actors in the lead roles of Link, Zelda and Ganondorf, computing magic and creature effects and a sweeping orchestral score. A mix of movie computing and video fake.

Unknown actor JR Killigrew is far too old to play Link, surely?

BLIZZARD

Blizzard Entertainment unveiled details of a new hero class for MMORPG World of Warcraft. There are unsubtle touchdown bearing five abilities including the mum-bashing Bomb Pit and the deadly Spin Slam. Better yet, players activate abilities with a Guitar Hero-style fret board, so would do if the whole thing wasn't a big quiver of spot proposition.

Imagine wielding your keyboard like a guitar – not so plausible now is it?

EGM

American mag Electronic Gaming Monthly pulled a fast one with their announcement that Bungie had teamed up with Lego to produce the ultimate Halo 3 Lego Halo. The game was due to follow the same winning formula as the Lego Star Wars titles and would feature massive boss battles at the end of the Halo game.

Some news sites were so convinced by this story that they ran the pics themselves.

KONAMI & UBISOFT

Konami and Ubisoft cleverly announced their talents to produce this video of Snake in someone's game – Snake's Creed if you will. We weren't impressed for a second that Altair is really Snake but it shows off a nice big chunk of gameplay footage from both!

Solid Assassin – Snake (or is it Altair) nips out for a quick fag break.

XBOX 360 TO GET MOTION CONTROLS?

Unconfirmed rumours suggest so...

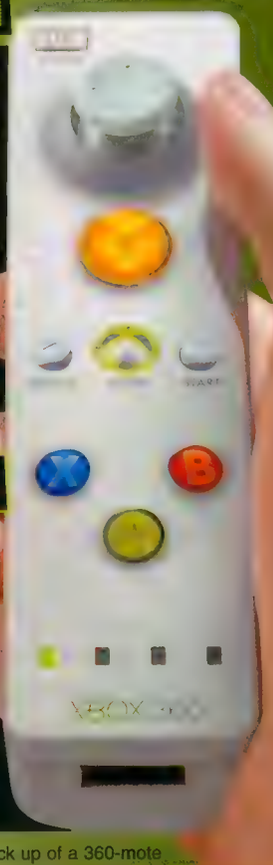
The information came from an unnamed source and was leaked to an unusual news site but rumour has it that Microsoft is working on their own version of Nintendo's Wii-mote motion control system. By all accounts, a developer close to Microsoft claims that such a motion sensitive device has been worked on since summer 2007, alongside Rare (who have been working on an Xbox Live project called *The Fast and the Furriest*, a game said to incorporate a 'wand-like device', for some time now). While the first reports were initially dismissed as unfounded speculation, another site claiming to have information from 'internal sources at Microsoft' say that the project does exist, and is currently codenamed 'Newton' (named after the physicist Sir Isaac Newton). In addition, it may use an LED sensor bar, and will detect tilt and motion, provide rumble and wireless two-way communication. Is this a hint of Microsoft's future for 360 gaming, or merely a load of old guff?

Why it might be real

- As the *Scene It!* controller shows, Microsoft are keen for the 360 to appeal to a casual gaming audience
- A motion-sensing controller means that the 360 could compete directly with the Wii as well as the PS3
- The Wii makes an awful lot of money. Microsoft want some of it
- Microsoft could launch the controller initially as a gimmick – if it goes down well with gamers, its uses could be developed further. If not, then it's unlikely to cause a massive financial blow
- We'd get to play Wii-type games with HD quality graphics
- The Xbox 360 is the only console available at the moment without any motion controls incorporated

Why it might be fake

- Microsoft have previously commented that motion controls were 'irrelevant'
- Nobody has stepped forward to be named or admit the project is real
- Microsoft say they "refuse to comment on rumour or speculation"
- It seems two years too late to join in with a motion control system
- The prospect of Wii games being ported to 360 is a little bit terrifying
- More casual games could alienate the current Xbox 360 'hardcore' audience



*Our mock up of a 360-mote

IN A HAZE

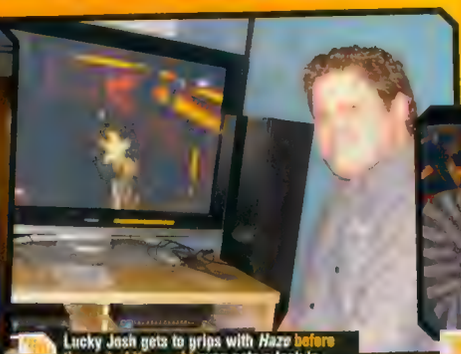
GM competition winner shows off his prize...

Thanks to *GamesMaster*, Ubisoft and Free Radical, Josh Crocott is, now, technically immortal. Back in October last year, we ran a competition with a very unique prize; to have a soldier named after yourself in the forthcoming first-person shooter, *Haze*.

As you might have guessed, Josh Crocott was that lucky winner. Not only is he one of the first people to play *Haze* (yes, even before most of us), but he got to go to Free Radical's development studios where he met all of the team who created the game and saw his digital namesake in action! Adding chocolate sprinkles, a handful of cherries a big blob of icing on the already particularly tasty cake, Josh also walked away with a PS3 and a copy of the game. Congratulations, Josh.

If there's a better way to spend all day playing with yourself we've yet to discover it...

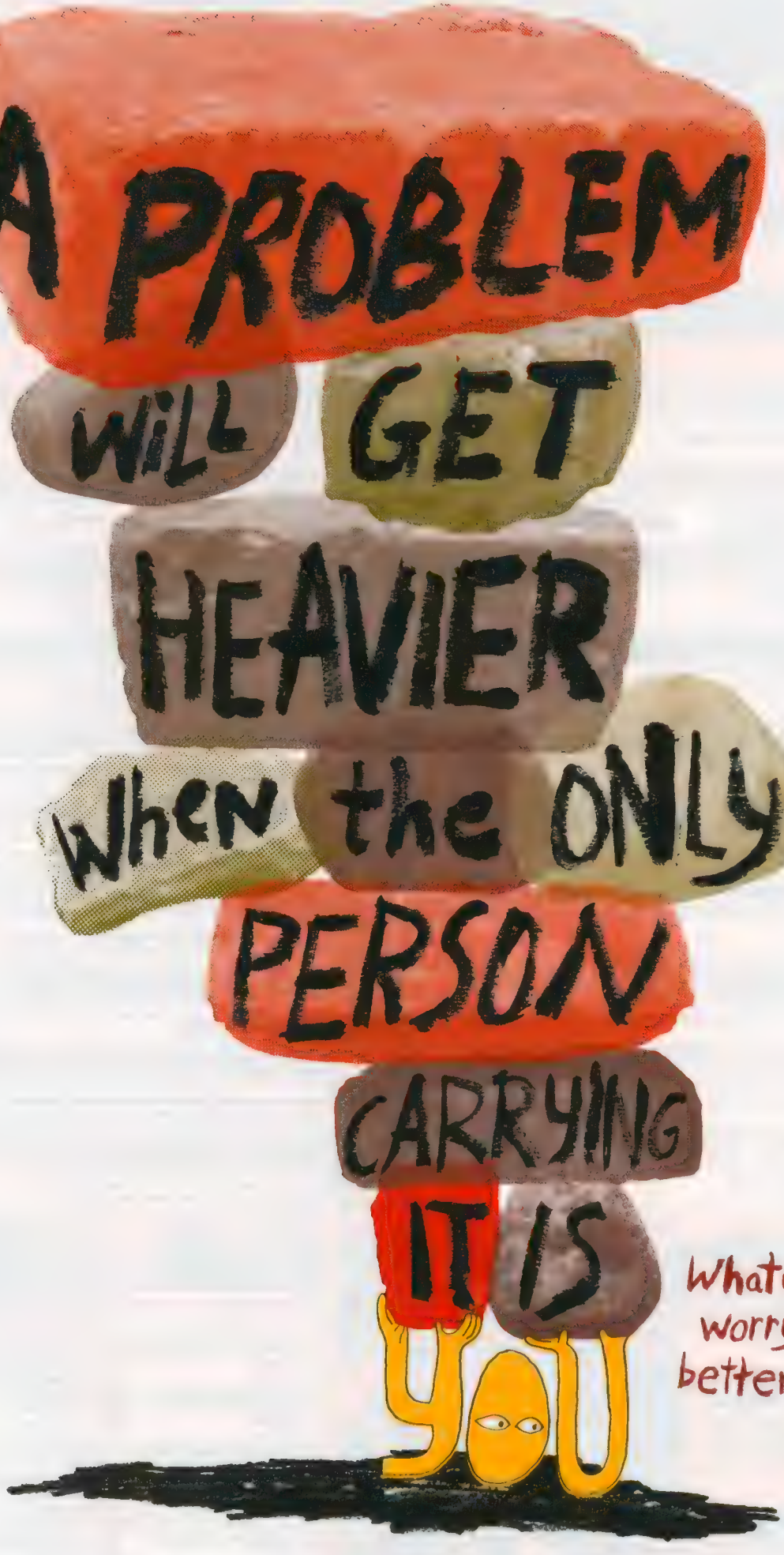
Members of Free Radical, the development team behind *Haze*, award Josh with his game.



Lucky Josh gets to grips with *Haze* before the rest of the world even gets a look in.

We're guessing that Josh is the guy sat in the middle. Not sure what gave that away.

How cool is this?! Now you too can blow Josh to pieces!



Whatever your worry, it's better out than in.

ChildLine
0800 1111

For confidential advice and support from someone you can trust, call us on 0800 11 11 or go to ChildLine.org.uk

100% new!

Big Games

Gran Turismo mastermind Kazunori Yamauchi claims that *Gran Turismo 5* could be getting what all discerning racing fans have been demanding for the past decade – a proper damage model. Although the full *Gran Turismo* is still set for 2009, Yamauchi reckons damage will be integrated later as a downloadable.

King Of Games

Horror author Stephen King has blasted politicians in the US state of Massachusetts for attempting to [illegible] to combat violence in video games. King said that the move was unconstructive. "There's a lot more to America's culture of violence than *Resident Evil 4*," said the 60-year-old.

UK Top 20 Games Chart

It may only be a prologue but *Gran Turismo* has roared up to first position. Sportsmen *Mario & Sonic* hang in there...

GM uses the ChartTrack chart – the only chart officially recognised by the UK software industry. Get the full 20 in *GM* every month!

ChartTrack **IT'S THE ONLY CHART THAT COUNTS!**

NO.		PREVIOUS POSITIONS Last week	2 weeks ago	3 weeks ago	GAME	PUBLISHER	GM'S SCORE	GM JUDGEMENTS
1	N	-	-	-	Gran Turismo 5: Prologue PS3	SONY	85%	A bite-sized taster of the forthcoming obsessive but sterile 'ultimate' racing simulator.
2	▼	1	-	-	Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas 2 PS3	UBISOFT	84%	Slicker than the original and still a solid addition to the vast array of current first-person shooter titles.
3	▼	2	1	2	Mario and Sonic at the Olympic Games Wii DS	SEGA	76%	This momentous meeting of two gaming greats makes for shallow stuff, but it's simple enough for anyone to play. Good, but not great.
4	▲	11	8	9	Pro Evolution Soccer 2008 PS2 PS3 Wii DS PSP GOLD AWARD	Konami	94%	*Pro Evolution Soccer* fulfils its next-gen promise with a game to send footy fans into ecstasy. Goooooaaal!!
5	▲	4	7	20	Guitar Hero 3: Legends of Rock PS2 PS3 Wii GOLD AWARD	Activision	90%	Complete with rock legends old and new there's nothing else like it. If you've never picked up a plastic guitar, now's the time to do it.
6	▲	10	-	-	Sega Superstar Tennis PS3	Sega	68%	Joyous presentation and great for Sega fans, slightly marred by an experience that isn't quite as good as *Virtua Tennis*.
7	▼	3	5	5	Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare PS3 DS PC GOLD AWARD	Activision	93%	Atmospheric visuals and cinematic gameplay make this quite simply the war shooter of the year. Make sure you play it. It's your duty.
8	N	-	-	-	Viking: Battle For Asgard PS3	Sega	77%	A satisfying slash-'em-up that would have really stood out if some more strategy was implemented into the gameplay.
9	▲	9	10	14	FIFA 08 PS2 PS3 Wii DS PSP	EA	75%	It's the ultimate *FIFA* in terms of licences, teams and presentation; but it fails to excite on the pitch. Great player models and animation.
10	▼	5	4	3	Dr Kawashima's Brain Training DS	Nintendo	80%	Clever Dr Kawashima's array of minigames will genuinely strengthen your mind, but it's not so much a game as a self-improvement aid.
11	▼	7	-	-	Wii Play Wii	Nintendo	50%	Not really a game as such but a capable if uninspired introduction to the wonders of the Wii.
12	▼	6	6	16	Carnival: Funfair Games Wii	Take2	56%	A colourful but underwhelming collection of minigames, some briefly amusing, others woeful beyond belief. Stay away from this carnival.
13	▼	12	3	4	Bully: Scholarship Edition PS2 Wii GOLD AWARD	Rockstar	90%	Fun, charming and genuinely entertaining. This is sandbox gaming without the gangsters. Shame about the 360 bugs, though.
14	▼	8	2	1	Army of Two PS3	EA	59%	Too many flaws with these high-fiving mercenary meatheads. Guess we'll keep on waiting for the ultimate next-gen co-op shooter...
15	▼	14	-	-	The Simpsons Game PS2 PS3 DS PSP	EA	79%	The gameplay isn't as polished as we'd like and it's hampered by some unoriginal level design, but fans shouldn't miss it.
16	▲	16	-	-	Command & Conquer: Kane's Wrath PC	EA	N/A	Chronologically confusing expansion but it does contain a collection of interesting new unit types.
17	R	-	-	-	MotorStorm PS3	EA	85%	A surprise re-entry into the charts for PS3's arcade off-road racer shows how desperate PS3-owners are for a fix of high-speed racing.
18	▼	13	9	12	Cooking Mama 2: Dinner with Friends DS	505 Games	78%	Simple and more-ish. *Cooking Mama 2* serves up a universally playable challenge. You'll still be hungry when you finish it, though.
19	▼	16	-	-	Assassin's Creed PS3	Ubisoft	88%	One of the best-looking games in the world but it's stretched out with repetitive missions. That said, you'll love what there is of it.
20	▼	17	19	-	Ben 10: Protector of Earth PS2 DS PSP	D3	N/A	Aliens. Watches. Saving the earth. We thought that job was for Captain Planet – but that just shows how old we are...

Software charts compiled by ChartTrack, ©2007 ELSPA (UK) Ltd. www.elspa.com Words: Shaun Curnow

1 Gran Turismo 5: Prologue PS3

The very fact that there were over a million pre-orders for *GT5: Prologue* goes to show how hungry gamers are for exclusive PS3 racing content. That it was *Gran Turismo*, and advertised to look as stunning as possible obviously helps. While we would prefer it to be the full game we've been waiting years for and for it to have moved the racing experience beyond that of graphical wonderment, we're not surprised about its top spot position.

8 Viking: Battle For Asgard PS3 360

While Viking may have arrived to a mixed critical reception, Sega's epic and bloody slash-'em-up has charted strongly in the UK. Considering that *God of War: Chains of Olympus* doesn't even make an appearance in this month's chart makes it even more surprising. We guess that if you want gore, it's got to be on the big screen!

14 Army of Two PS3 360

As we predicted, *Army of Two* is on a rapid slide down the chart rankings as the original fevered fans who lapped up the gun-toting goons and sent it to numero uno have now been replaced with more discerning gamers who require a lot more from their videogames than tramping through Middle Eastern countries with the same tact as an American president.

Better [illegible] if you want this little beauty.
Drifting is easier with the aid of a steering wheel.
"Oh my word – unicorn sniff! Oh, hang on..."
The bigger they are, the harder they fall...
"Later on me, when you're not strong and I'll be..."
"Sniff. That's beautiful. I [illegible]..."

Japan Charts

The Wii predictably dominates. WE WANT Yakuza 3 now!

1. Pokémon Rangers Battonage DS
2. Yakuza 3 PS3
3. Super Smash Bros Brawl Wii
4. Wii Fit Wii
5. DS Beautiful Letter Training DS
6. Dynasty Warriors Gundam Special Edition PS2
7. Decca Sports Wii
8. Metroid Prime 3: Corruption Wii
9. Armoured Core For Answer PS3
10. Wii Sports Wii

US Charts

Shooting things and rocking out – the staple US past-times ride high!

1. Super Smash Bros Brawl Wii
2. Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas 2 360
3. Wii Sports Wii
4. Wii Play Wii
5. Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare PS3
6. Guitar Hero 3: Legends of Rock Wii
7. Army of Two PS3
8. Super Mario Galaxy Wii
9. Link's Crossbow Training Wii
10. More Brain Training DS

IPHONE GAMING?

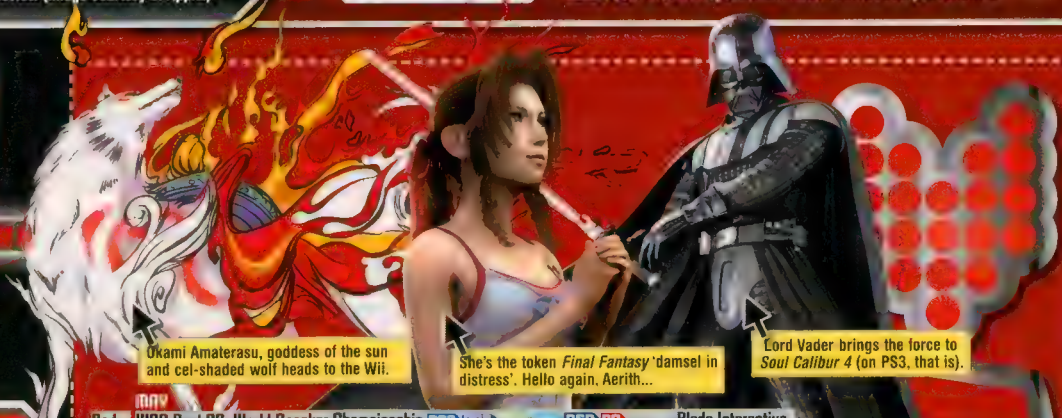
An analysis of the iPhone's specifications has revealed that the revolutionary handset compares well to handheld consoles the DS and PSP. The Apple device outstrips its rivals in terms of memory and also features a DS-style touch-screen, but some experts still don't believe it can cut it as a viable gaming platform, despite developers such as EA and Team 17 expressing interest in producing titles for the device. (Image courtesy of Apple.)

BOLL POLL

Gamers have set up an online petition requesting that infamous German director Uwe Boll stop making film adaptations of videogames. The site cites "distasteful handling" and "lack of comprehension" of [illegible] Boll's crimes against cinema, in 2006 the *House of the Dead* and *Alone in the Dark* director tackled five of his harshest critics by beating them in a boxing match. Join in at www.petitiononline.com/RRH53888/petition.html.

WATCH OUT FOR...

Some of the games likely to be flying off the shelves very soon...



Okami Amaterasu, goddess of the sun and cel-shaded wolf heads to the Wii.

She's the token *Final Fantasy* 'damsel in distress'. Hello again, Aerith...

Lord Vader brings the force to *Soul Calibur 4* (on PS3, that is).

THIS MONTH
HAZE

Exclusively available for the PS3, Sony fans should soon be addicted to this like the Mantel troopers are to their Nectar.

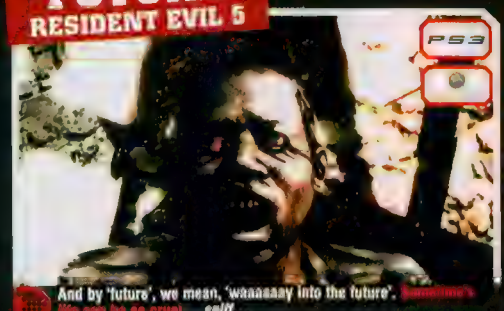
NEXT MONTH
METAL GEAR SOLID 4

We'll discover in June if Snake has the power and courage to see off the Patriots, or if he just dies from a coughing fit.

3 MONTHS
MANHUNT 2

At long last, Rockstar's controversial and brutal, [illegible] bloody-pulp-'em-up, gets the release it so richly deserves.

FUTURE
RESIDENT EVIL 5



And by 'future', we mean, 'waaaaaay into the future'. Sometimes life can be so cruel... sniff...

Get Bored with the Sun?

MAY

2nd	WSC Real 08: World Snooker Championship	PS2	PS3						PSP	PC					Blade Interactive
2nd	Dream Pinball 3D	PC													Topware Southpeak
2nd	Overclocked	PC													House of Tales
2nd	Pool Party														Southpeak
2nd	Ultimate Board Games								PSP						Empire Interactive
2nd	Secret Files: Tunguska														Haen games
2nd	Tangram Mania	DS													505 Games
2nd	Belief and Betrayal	PC													Lighthouse
2nd	Counter Force														Conspiracy Entertainment
2nd	Pop!														505 Games
2nd	TNA Impact	PS2	PS3												Midway
2nd	The Destiny Of Zorro														505 Games
2nd	Wild Arms 5: 10th Anniversary Edition	PS2													505 Games
2nd	Golden Axe	PS3													Sega
4th	Williams Pinball	PS2							PSP						System 3
9th	Warhammer: Mark of Chaos - Battle March									PC					Namco Bandai
9th	High School Musical 2: Work This Out	DS													Disney
9th	Boom Blox														EA
9th	Too Human														Microsoft
9th	SOCOM: Confrontation	PS3													Sony
9th	Disaster: Day of Crisis														Nintendo
9th	Legend of Sayuki	PS2													505 Games
16th	Destroy All Humans!: Path of the Furon	PS3													THQ
16th	Jackass The Game	DS													Empire
16th	DeBlob														THQ
16th	Dream Pinball 3D	DS													Topware Southpeak
16th	Supreme Ruler	PC													Paradox Interactive
23rd	Age Of Conan - Hyborian Adventures	PC													Funcom
23rd	Haze	PS3													Ubisoft
23rd	TopSpin 3	PS3							DS						2K Sports
23rd	Mahjongg	DS													Koch Media
23rd	A Vampire Story	PC													Ascaron
23rd	Pirates: Duels on the High Seas	DS													Oxygen
23rd	Street Football	DS													Koch Media
23rd	Mary King's Riding School	DS													Ghostlight
23rd	Decathletes	DS	PSP												Ghostlight
30th	Super Smash Bros Brawl														Nintendo
30th	Mercenaries 2: Word in flames														EA
30th	Ninja Gaiden 2														Tecmo
30th	Alone In The Dark	PS3													Atari
30th	Okami														Capcom
30th	Iron Man	PS2	PS3						DS	PSP	PC				Sega
30th	Subbuteo	DS													505 Gamestreet
30th	Urban Extreme (Popcorn Arcade)														Data Design
30th	Warriors of the Lost Empire	PSP													Mercury Games
30th	WoW: Wrath of the Lich King Expansion Pack	PC													Blizzard
30th	Starcraft 2	PC													Blizzard
30th	Tom Clancy's EndWar									PC					Ubisoft

JUNE

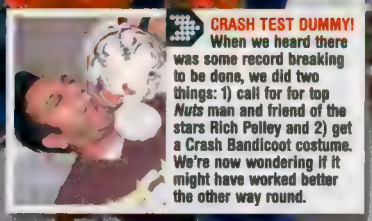
6th	Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	PS2	PS3						DS	PSP	PC				LucasArts
6th	Indiana Jones														LucasArts
6th	Sid Meier's Civilization Revolution	PS3													2K Games
6th	Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway	PS3													Ubisoft
6th	Soul Calibur: Legends														Namco Bandai
6th	FlatOut Ultimate Carnage	PC													Empire
6th	Guild Universe	PC													JoWooD
6th	The Incredible Hulk	PS2	PS3						DS	PSP					Sega
6th	Skate Park City	PSP													Midas
12th	Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots	PS3													Konami
13th	Midnight Club: Los Angeles	PS3													Rockstar
13th	Battlefield: Bad Company	PS3													EA
13th	PDC World Championship Darts 2008								PSP						Oxygen
13th	CID: The Dummy	PS2							PSP	PC					Oxygen
13th	Don King Presents: PrizeFighter Boxing								DS						2K Games
20th	Sports Island														Konami
20th	Wall E	PS3													THQ
20th	Final Fantasy 7: Crisis Core	PSP													Square Enix
20th	The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian	PS2	PS3						DS	PC					Disney
20th	Pipemania	PS2	DS	PSP	PC										Empire
20th	New International Track and Field	DS													Konami
20th	Off Road														Kplosiv
26th	Kengo 3	PS2													Ubisoft
26th	SNK Vs Capcom Card Fighters	DS													Ignition
27th	Unreal Tournament 3														Midway
27th	FIFA Street 3	PS3													EA
27th	The Bourne Conspiracy	PS3													Vivendi Games

Need Our Warning?

Here at *GM* we endeavour to bring you the most accurate release dates around. But the games industry is a fickle beast so bear in mind that the info above is constantly on the move. If it doesn't come out when we say it does, blame someone else!

MAKING FRIENDS!
Come here, Spyro! Gizza hug! We're all in this together!

THREE SO FAR!
Oi! Sonic! Three mascots isn't bad, but it's hardly the greatest world record ever. Let's go and make some more friends!



CRASH TEST DUMMY!
When we heard there was some record breaking to be done, we did two things: 1) call for for top *Nuts* man and friend of the stars Rich Pelley and 2) get a Crash Bandicoot costume. We're now wondering if it might have worked better the other way round.

ANYONE IN NEED OF A PUMBER?
With this many Marios, you have to wonder what's happened to all the Luigis!

WEEEEEEE!
Hey, pedestrians! Get out of the way. There's a World Record attempt going on here! Now, where did everybody else go?

GamesMaster GETS INTO THE GUINNESS BOOK OF

We're mascot-wearing, pedestrian-annoying, cosplaying record breakers!

There are some World Records it'd be great fun to break. The longest time spent in bed playing videogames with your mum topping up your Coke and bucket of popcorn on request. The biggest collection of videogames, all sent to you for free by games companies in edible jiffy bags with sweets at the bottom and each hand-delivered by a puppy, who's also yours to keep. All great ideas for World Records, but not actually as good as those covered in the brand new *Guinness Book of World Records Gamers Edition*! Best-selling coin-operated fighting game of all time? *Street Fighter 2*. Number of combinations of sound effects in *Colin McRae DiRT*? 1,005,772,154, 467,879,035,136. Best-selling videogame theme song in Japan? *Kingdom Hearts*. They're all there!

The best thing about the brand new *Guinness Book of World Records Gamers Edition* was that the other day, they decided to set a brand new World Record, 'The Largest Gathering of Games Characters', by seeing how many cosplayers dressed up as all your favourite gaming characters they could gather on the slightly wobbly Millennium Bridge over the river Thames in London. And guess who was inside the rather-sweaty Crash Bandicoot costume? Only your favourite magazine, *GamesMaster*!

PLUS!

Scariest outfit!
Blue Wolf (Garurumon) from Digimon. Eesk...

Best look-a-like!

Most obscure outfit!
Blokey with the big pink head. (Bubba from *Boogie*).

Strangest Dance!

Hardest to breathe!
Psycho Bunny. (The Bloke in gas mask.)

BEST AND WORST

Meet our new friends!

SKIMPIEST OUTFIT!

Rikku from Final Fantasy X
Hello! Who are you? I'm Grace, 15, from Feltham.
Aren't you a bit cold? Yes.
How long did it take to make your costume? About two weeks.
Are you the most fierce lara today?
I think all Everyone's put so much effort into their costumes, it's great.

SEXIEST LADY!

Ulala, Space Channel Five
Hello! Who are you? I'm Fran, 25, from Oxford.
Did you have help making your costume? All my own handiwork!
What's the secret to making the pant? It's all about the detail.
Have you dressed up as a game character before?
Yes! As Chun Li, Lara Croft and more.

LOOKS MOST LIKE YOUR DAD!

Gordon Freeman, Half Life 2
Hello! Who are you? I'm Tim, 28, from Plymouth.
Have you made any new friends today? Yes. It's always nice meeting people with similar interests.
Did you come dressed as the bus like that? Yes.
Anybody seem your fancy? Ulala, Space Channel Five, is quite sexy!

MOST RUBBISH OUTFIT!

Bloke dressed as a Sim
Hello! Are you real? No. I'm Timmy, 28, from Swallow. I'm a Sim.
That's a bit random. Well, it meant I could just come in the clothes I was wearing anyway.
Have you been to this sort of thing before? I once dressed up a Manny Calavera from Grim Fandango. All I did was put a tube over my head.

MOST LIKELY TO BE BLOWN AWAY!

Pinky from Pac-Man
Hello! Are you going to eat us?
No. I'm a friendly ghost. My name's Tim.
Did your mum help you make your costume?
Any sign of Pac-Man? Yeah – he's over there!
How about Blinky, Inky or Clyde? Haven't seen them!

Words: Rich 'Les Ellis' Pelley. Photos: Ellis O'Brien

WORLD RECORDS!

SUITED UP!
Where *do* you get a Crash Bandicoot suit from? How do you get into one? And are you sure you can breathe in there?

ROLL CALL!
Lara Croft? Here. A gaggle of Marios? Here. Ulala from Space Channel Five? Here. Oi! Stop shoving at the back!

WE'RE RECORD BREAKERS!
We did it! The official World Record for the largest gathering of games characters stands at 80! A man from *The Guinness Book of World Records* gave us a plaque to prove it.

PHEW! CAN WE GO HOME NOW?
Tiring work, all this world record breaking! Plus, it's about a zillion degrees in here. We need a lie-down...

RECORD BREAKERS!

Other crazy world records from the *Guinness Book of World Records Gamers Edition 2008*!

Smallest Dance Dance Revolution mat!
10cm x 11.5cm and weighs just 20g.

Most expensive homemade flight sim cockpit!
Australian Matthew Sheil spent eight years recreating the cockpit of an actual Boeing 747-400 costing £132,000.

Largest instruction booklet!
Chinese and Japanese versions of Gran Turismo 4 included a 212-page reference guide.

Most collectable items!
3,701 bananas, 40 medals, 20 fairies, 40 blueprints, 8 boss keys, 10 battle crowns, 1 Nintendo coin and 1 Rareware coin in *Donkey Kong 64* on the N64.

Smallest game of Tetris!
A game of *Tetris* was played using 1/1000th of a millimetre glass blocks at the Physics Department at Amsterdam University in November 2002.

The Guinness World Records Gamers Edition 2008 is on sale now.

EVERYONE!

How many game characters can *you* spot?

Can you see Aerith Gainsbrough (Final Fantasy), Alice (American McGee's Alice), Amy (Sonic the Hedgehog), Apollo Justice (Ace Attorney), Big Smoke/Ryder (GTA San Andreas), Cait Sith (Final Fantasy 7), Combine Soldier (Half-Life 2), CRASH BANDICOOT, Daxhax (Mystic Inn), Detective Gumshoe (Phoenix Wright), Franziska von Karma (Phoenix Wright), Gordon Freeman (Half-Life), Guybrush Threepwood (Monkey Island), Hare Hare Yukai (Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya), Jen Tate (Primal), Jill Valentine (Resident Evil), Mikoto Kirija (Persona 3), Kyon Haruhi (Suzumiya), Larxene (Kingdom Hearts), Lloyd Irving (Tales of Symphonia), Lulu (Final Fantasy), Marie, Phoenix Wright, Pinky the Ghost (Pac-Man), Pokémon Trainer, Rikku (Final Fantasy X-2), Sorie (Zelda), Stuyguy (Super Mario), A Sim (The Sims), Sonic, Spyro the Dragon, Summana Yna (Final Fantasy), Fox McCloud (Star Fox), Tails, The Player (Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town), The Protagonist (Persona 3), Ulala (Space Channel 5), Vincent Valentine and White Mage (Final Fantasy), Yami Yugi (Yu-Gi-Oh!) and Yoshi?

GM MOST WANTED GAMES

The ones making us dribble with excitement!

1 RESIDENT EVIL 5

Umbrella's trail takes Chris Redfield across the world to Haiti as he vows to expose them once and for all.

We're desperate to see what frights Capcom have in store for us this time around!

OUT: TBC 2008 360, PS3

2 LEGO: INDIANA JONES

018

WHAT IS IT?: *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *The Temple of Doom* and *The Last Crusade* recreated with that irresistible Lego magic.

WHY WE WANT IT: After completing *Star Wars* we need new challenges and laughs.

OUT: JUNE DS, PSP

3 SONIC UNLEASHED

A brand new 2D/3D Sonic game with its biggest ever budget and Hedgehog/Vampire crossovers!

No-one likes seeing Sonic fail so this could finally be the blue streak's upturn in fortunes.

OUT: TBC

4 RACE DRIVER GRID

023

WHAT IS IT?: Codemasters latest – and fastest – racer features famous European stadiums and aggressive racing.

WHY WE WANT IT: *GM* loves smashing up its vehicles and the powerful new damage engine is a sight to behold!

OUT: JUNE

5 SIMS 3

038

Potentially huge new version of *The Sims* with brand new features including a new Create-a-Sim mode!

The Sims always gives us hours of enjoyment and it's great to see a new version instead of another update.

OUT: TBC

6 MGS 4

WHAT IS IT?: Snake unplugs his Catheter for one last time to prevent Ocelot's war destroying the world.

WHY WE WANT IT: Why wouldn't we want it? Smashing visuals, incredible combat and the best story around.

OUT: JUNE PS3

7 NINJA GAIDEN 2

026

More over-the-top hack-'n'-slash adventuring with Ryu, as the super hard ninja embarks on his latest quest.

To see if Ryu's brand new arsenal can help get us through one of the toughest and bloodiest games ever created!

OUT: JUNE

8 ALIENS: COLONIAL MARINES

024

WHAT IS IT? Shooter based on the *Alien* movies featuring squad-based action.

WHY WE WANT IT: The films always gave us nightmares when we were kids, so it'll be great to exact revenge on the Alien menace.

OUT: TBC

9 50 CENT BLOOD ON THE SAND

032

The sequel to Fiddy's first outing using the Unreal 3 engine.

50 Cent hasn't been concentrating on his music of late so surely he's been tucked away making a good game?

OUT: TBC

10 SOUL CALIBUR 4

WHAT IS IT? The next instalment of one of the most graceful brawlers about featuring brand new characters and fighting styles.

WHY WE WANT IT: To put some more oomph in the fighting genre and to help extinguish the memory of Legends...

OUT: SUMMER

CAST WIDE

There are around 70 characters to unlock in the game and just like the *Star Wars* series you can replay the levels with them in Free Play once they've been completed in the Story Mode. There's some cracking bad guys in there such as Belloq and Mola Ram.

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?

The Indiana Jones trilogy gets the brick treatment just like *Star Wars*.

FACTS

- Over 70 characters to unlock
- First three films playable
- Two player co-op

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...

Transformers: The Game..... 59%
Lego Star Wars: Complete Trilogy. 90%

Lego Indy scratches his Lego stubble while figuring out the weight of a Lego head.

JUNGLE GYM

The exotic locations from the film have been recreated with that bold and simple Lego look and just like any other film tie-in, they've been creative with the environments designing plenty of puzzles and levels that don't appear in the films.

SIDEKICKS

Rather than just having certain doors for certain characters as used in *Lego Star Wars*, they've tried to identify the different skills of each Indy sidekick and incorporate them into the puzzles. Satipo here specialises in digging and betrayal.

HA! VERY FUNNY

Every cutscene is laced with humour – even the potentially gory bits are given a unique twist. Here Indiana Jones empties his distinctive man-bag only to find Threepio's head rather than the stolen idol. Cue camp robot impression from Belloq.

DR JONES

He might not have any Jedi mind powers, but there's little that Indiana Jones can't do with just his fists, his mind and liberal use of a bull-whip. Also he has more alternate costumes than you might at first think thanks to his roles as an academic and a lady's man.

DS PSP PC • RELEASE: JUNE • FORMAT PLAYED: XBOX 360 • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
• DEVELOPER: TRAVELLER'S TALES • ONLINE: CO-OP • WEB: LEGOINDYGAME.COM • PLAYERS: 1-2

LEGO INDIANA JONES™ THE VIDEO GAME

We always knew some day he'd come walking back through our door...

Some of Indy's nastier scenes have been toned down to suit the tone of the game.

As soon as we started playing Lego Indy a crowd formed. With so many games played in the office, it takes something special to attract attention but all it took was the opening 'bom-ba-da-pa' of John Williams' score to have other people scurrying in.

They all stayed as well, keen to see just how the boulder chase has been replicated, if you could pull the heart out of man in an E-rated game and how Sean Connery looks in Lego.

This is part of the magic of the Traveller's Tales Lego games, as it's impossible not to be curious as to how they've repackaged classic scenes, seared into the minds of many through repeat viewings, giving it a unique Lego twist and irresistible humour.

The other part of this winning Lego formula is the immediate and fast-paced gameplay that has enough substance to sustain repeat play and offer some of the best co-op tomfoolery around. It worked perfectly for the *Star Wars* films so it's no surprise that little has changed for the *Indiana Jones* trilogy – there are still showers of Lego studs to harvest, still character specific secrets to find and still loads of characters to unlock.

WHIPPED UP

The biggest change in gameplay terms between *Indy* and *Star Wars* concerns the lead character's skill set as gone are the Jedi mind powers and double jumps to be replaced

"BEST OF ALL WERE THE FREQUENT LAUGH-OUT-LOUD MOMENTS"

THE INDY 500

There are several vehicle sections in the game, some surprisingly stop-start as there are puzzles to solve on foot.

The bikes are fantastic – nippy, easy to handle and you can pull wheelies on them too by pressing B.

As well as motorised transport there's some of the four-legged kind to mount up on.

As well as these llamas there's a secret anachronistic skidoo in the Tibet level.

CRACKIN'

Apart from being one of the greatest movie heroes of all time, Indy's other stand out quality is his skill with the bull-whip. It's a surprisingly diverse tool, handily giving him the edge in combat, platforming and puzzle solving.

Indy carries his whip with him at all times, even with his academic outfit.

Indy can't jump as high as some but he can swing across gaps.

The whip can be used in combat to strike opponents or pull them down.

There are certain levers that can only be reached with the whip.

Indy's sidekicks are all very handy with their fists, especially Marion who's inclined to give Indy a belt around the face when she feels he needs one.

The Temple of Doom levels are perfect for breaking up all the Nazi bashing of *Raiders* and the *Last Crusade*. In fact, it's our current favourite of the three.

with Indiana Jones's courage, strength and skill with a whip. So now the fights are more like bar brawls as Indy uses a combination of fists, bottles and chairs to make his point. Meanwhile, the puzzles require the use of tools to complete now and the sidekicks play a far more important role.

Traveller's Tales were conscious that while there were loads of playable characters in the *Star Wars* games many of them were limited in terms of what they brought to the gameplay. Subsequently, many secondary characters in the Indy game have skills unique to them such as Willie Scott's ability to crack glass by singing high notes. Then there is the use of tools in puzzle solving, which allows any character to be helpful to Indy once they pick up a spanner or a spade.

What characters can't do is [illegible] taken into account with a new fear system that renders characters useless when faced with a phobia. This means Indy turns into a quivering jelly when faced with snakes and so allows the sidekick – Marion or Sallah – to take the lead, light fires to scare away the reptiles and give our hero some time to clear his head. The fact that Indiana Jones isn't an all-powerful Jedi allows the other playable characters to emerge from his shadow and makes the co-operative game all the more fulfilling. We're not saying there's not going to be any arguments over who gets to control Indiana Jones, but we can guarantee you're still going to have fun even if you end up as Marcus Brody.

NAZI KNOCKOUT

One aspect that might annoy the Indiana Jones hardcore is that some of the grittier elements of the films have been refined for the 'younger' gamer. So now Indy's guide in Raiders doesn't end up skewered on spikes, Arnold Toht burns his butt cheeks on the staff headpiece rather than having the markings branded on his hand and there's a complete absence of Nazis – instead of SS brutes getting in Indy's way you get some world-threatening extremists instead. Don't worry, they haven't altered the plots of *Raiders* or *The Last Crusade*, they've just wiped the Indy universe clean of all Swastikas therefore protecting today's kids from the terrors of a GCSE History course's contents.

It's hard not to be enchanted by *Lego Indy* as the combination of movie nostalgia and accessible gameplay means there's something to love for every age of gamer. It's important to note though, this is just like *Lego Star Wars* and that the changes are subtle rather than far reaching. But as many gamers feel Traveller's Tales have hit upon a type of gaming alchemy there's no doubting that *Lego Indy* and the upcoming Batman games will be massive hits.

Here's the karate-kicking Short Round appearing here without his slick shoes.

And here it is – the Lost Ark of the Covenant in all it's Lego glory. You have to solve loads more puzzles in the game to get to it than Indy did in the film.

This is one of the South American natives Belloq has hired as his muscle.

Ever wondered what Sean Connery would look like as a Lego man? Well, here's the answer. As for the banana, it shows up quite often in various comic cutscenes.

SHOW STOPPER

Even for those who might find the gameplay slightly simple, there's plenty of incentive to plough through the game. Each classic Indy set-piece has been replicated beautifully...

The opening level includes a running-away-from-a boulder section.

Indy meets his match in the form of this Aryan bare-chested monster.

Mola Ram turns up for the bridge fight at the end of *Temple of Doom*.

There's even a Lego version of the beginning of *The Temple of Doom*.

JUST THE TOOL

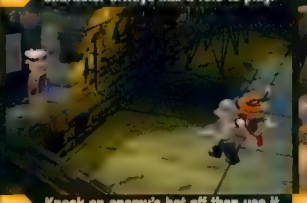
There's a lot more to Indy's puzzle solving than finding keys and pulling levers, as many of the challenges have been designed to require specific items. And these items will require some work to find...

There's plenty of building that needs completing – without force powers.

Platforms must be raised to open some tombs. Watch out for traps.

It's well balanced so the non-Indy character always has a role to play.

There are keys to collect but many puzzles aren't that predictable.



Knock an enemy's hat off then use it as a disguise to enter compounds.

Certain tools such as spades are needed to complete some challenges.

Willie Scott whose screams have won many admirers but many more haters.

Indy can't jump that high but he puts his whip to good use.

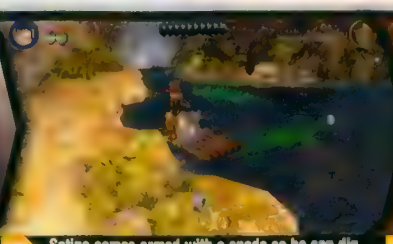
Return to the hub and replay levels with other characters.

"IT'S HARD NOT TO BE ENCHANTED BY THIS – THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERY GAMER HERE"

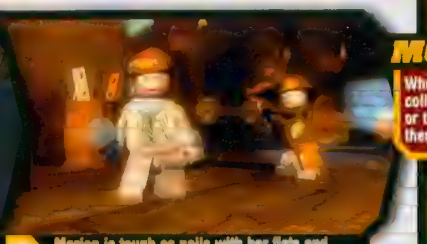
SKILLED WORKFORCE

A conscious effort has been made to give specific skills to each of Indy's sidekicks to make them just as important as the archaeologist lead.

Willie Scott is notorious for her screaming so she's able to break panes of glass with her shrill shrieks.



Satipo comes armed with a spade so he can dig and use it as an oar to steer and power rafts.



Marion is tough as nails with her fists and can jump higher than Indy.

HANDS ON

PREVIEWER: Dave

HOW FINISHED? 30%

CONTROLS

- A - Jump
- B - Use item
- Y - Swap character
- X - Attack

RB/LB - Change character in Free Play mode
Right analogue - Move character
Left analogue - Move camera

WE PLAYED IT AT...
The *GM* games room.

WHAT WE PLAYED
- ✔ Raiders of the Lost Ark
- ✔ The Temple of Doom
- ✔ The Last Crusade

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

No surprises really – it plays just like *Lego Star Wars* with its joyous blend of co-operative puzzle solving, basic action and bouncy platforming. The differences are all in the detail, particularly in the way Indiana's unique skills have replaced all the Jedi mind powers. Now it's about using the whip, building objects by hand and constantly making use of the objects found.

ANY PROBLEMS?

Those expecting a large step forward from *Lego Star Wars* might be disappointed. It's also surprising how many times you get stuck in what you'd expect to be a free flowing game, particularly the vehicle bits.

BEST BIT SO FAR

The opening of *The Temple of Doom*, which starts with a Lego-ed Cole Porter number from Willie Scott, a champagne flute being spiked and a poisoned Indy swaying around a chaotic nightclub. The Temple of Doom is certainly *not* the weakest film.

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ Every cutscene being a winner
+ Character differences

GM HATES
- Getting stuck
- More should be made of the vehicles

MOST WANTED RATING 5

Whether it's the addictive Lego stud collecting, the co-operative adventuring or the excitement as playing as Dr Jones, there's something for all gamers here.

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: LEGO Star Wars, ... The Complete Saga, 90%
BIGGEST RIVAL: ..LEGO Batman ..... (autumn)

DS • OUT: SEPTEMBER • FORMAT: DS • DEVELOPER: BIOWARE • PUBLISHER: SEGA
ONLINE: TBC • WEB: SEGA.COM/GAMESITE/SONICCHRONICLES • PLAYERS: 1-4

SONIC CHRONICLES: THE DARK BROTHERHOOD

HANDS ON

PREVIEWER: Rory

BioWare go the whole hog for this Sonic RPG...

Since his first appearance in 1991, Sonic the Hedgehog has gradually transformed from videogaming icon into the unfortunate figurehead of an increasingly bewildering series of plodding 3D adventures and misguided side projects. But with the announcement of *Sonic Unleashed* and *Sonic Chronicles* things could be on the up for the world's most famous Hedgehog. In the latter, Sonic's pointy red sneakers have taken an unexpected sidestep into RPG country, but with Bioware providing directions success seems assured.

Chronicles' emphasis on exploration and puzzle-solving is a change of pace for the series that has forced BioWare to reimagine some Sonic staples. Our hero is still fast, for example, but now his speed will allow him to escape foes or use loops and ramps to access new areas. Elsewhere other obstacles will call for other abilities. This will usually mean searching for and recruiting a new ally, or splitting up your party to take on a multi-part puzzle.

For the first time in the series' history the inclusion of multiple characters (11 are playable here) is justified. In the past, Sonic's 3D games ironically made the characters feel more 2D personality wise, but the *Mass Effect* developers have fleshed them out with sharp dialogue and a refreshing sense of humour. Here Sonic is cast as the arrogant hero, Tails is insightful and Rouge is, well, a bit tarty. The love/hate relationship between Sonic and Amy is particularly well played.

SONIC BOOM

From our initial play of this we're confident that what lies beneath the surface gloss of the painterly new art-style more than justifies the initial buzz behind the series' bold new direction. This is shaping up to be the most impressive Sonic title since the little fella sped onto the Mega Drive!

Special moves require you to do different things with the stylus – here you need to hit those targets. Go Sonic go...

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?

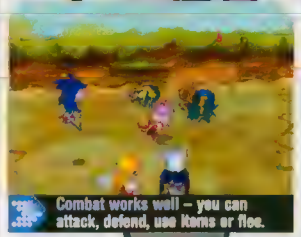
Sonic and Co's first RPG-style adventure, developed by the makers of *Mass Effect*.

FACTS

- 11 playable characters
- Four-player co-op through one cart
- Over 20 areas to explore

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...

Mass Effect 90%
Jade Empire 85%



Combat works well – you can attack, defend, use items or flee.

"THIS IS SHAPING UP TO BE THE MOST IMPRESSIVE SONIC TITLE SINCE HE SPED ON TO MEGA DRIVE"

BIO SHOCKS

Hats off to BioWare; turn-based combat, revealing conversations, levelling up, special attacks, side quests and an expansive environment are all here – a role-player's dream!

Point at where you want to go and Sonic will quickly oblige you.

Occasionally you'll need to split up in order to solve a puzzle.

The locations are varied and have a lovely hand-painted style.

The top-screen shows who's currently in your party.

HOW FINISHED? 30%

CONTROLS

Stylus – Movement, interaction, attacks and menu
D-pad – select characters

WE PLAYED IT AT...

GM's offices.

WHAT WE PLAYED

- ✔ Stages 1 and 2
- ✔ Combat
- ✔ Exploration
- ✔ Puzzles

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

With stylus-based controls and turn-based combat it plays a bit like a cross between the *Phantom Hourglass* and a *Final Fantasy* adventure, but there are enough familiar faces and places to keep it feeling like a Sonic game at heart. Using the game's 11 characters overcoming obstacles is fun and thought-provoking, and the varied specials add pizzazz to the combat. Meanwhile the reinvention of familiar environments and (very) welcome invigoration of the characters might just manage to please obsessive fans and long-term Sonic phobes alike.

ANY PROBLEMS?

Not really, though the interactive elements of the scenery could make more inventive use of the touch-screen and stylus.

BEST BIT SO FAR

The conversations between the characters – which are managed by choosing from a list of expression icons – is a hoot. It's fun delving into subplots and backstories and for the first time in a long time we're not filled with the desire to gag Tails with duct tape.

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ Sonic being cool again
+ Great RPG elements
+ Lovely graphical style

GM HATES

- Having to wait until September
- Some unimaginative use of the stylus

MOST WANTED RATING

Hurrah, Sonic gets a much needed overhaul without compromising any of the series' charm. Welcome back old friend... We can't wait to see more!

5

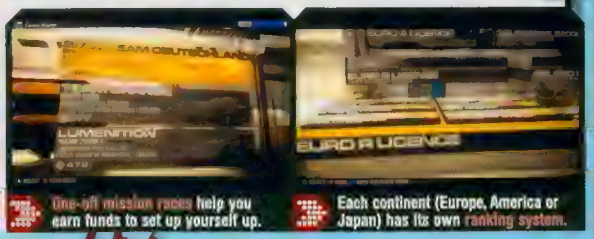
CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: ... Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time, 90%
BIGGEST RIVAL: Super Smash Bros Brawl, 92%

Try the dashboard view for the ultimate, head-shaking racing experience. You'll have to make good use of your mirrors...

HIT THE ROAD

The preview version we played only had 'Driver For Hire' one-off races, but the full game will have three championship trees to climb. Upper tiers are unlocked with reputation points, which are earned by winning races. Like *Forza 2*, you can earn more reputation points by turning off the driver aids and upping the difficulty.

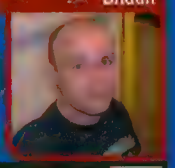


One-off mission races help you earn funds to set up yourself up.

Each continent (Europe, America or Japan) has its own ranking system.

HANDS ON

PREVIEWER: Shaun



HOW FINISHED? 30%

CONTROLS
Left Trigger - Brake
Right Trigger - Accelerate
LB - Switch view
B - Handbrake

WE PLAYED IT AT...
GM Towers, inside our ominous 'Games Cage'.

WHAT WE PLAYED
- ✔ Drifting a Nissan Silvia around the Tokyo Docks
- ✔ Racing a Mustang Cobra in San Francisco
- ✔ A DBR9 around Milan
- ✔ A 350Z around Shibuya

PS3 PC DS • OUT: JUNE 2008 • AVAILABLE ON: XBOX 360 • DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS • PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS • GUIDANCE: WWW.RACEDRIVERGRID.COM • PLAYERS: 1-12

RACE DRIVER GRID

Sit down, shut up and hold on for the most exciting racer of 2008...

If you've ever raced a car in any sort of competitive sense (and we don't mean a couple of enthusiastic laps of the B&Q car park or a spirited drive around the M25), then you'll know a few things. It's a noisy, smelly, scary, thrilling, sweaty, bone-jarring experience that pumps you so full of adrenaline it makes your eyes buzz inside your head.

Race Driver: GRID is about as close as you can get to that feeling without having to put on a helmet.

TYRED PLAY?

After having recently been subjected to *Gran Turismo 5: Prologue* (a game that should come packaged with a bottle of morphine so you are appropriately sedated before you turn it on), *GRID* feels like a revelation. It's dirty, gritty and dangerous; tyres release plumes of smoke, rival cars spin off and crumple as they hit barriers, rough landings crash down with head-shaking force, glass shatters, tyre walls explode into individual hoops of rubber, scattered bits of bodywork lie on the track threatening to (and able to) send your car into a devastating barrel roll. It has a level of risk and danger that few racers attempt and even fewer pull off convincingly.

Race Driver: GRID nestles itself comfortably between the purity and simulation authenticity of *Forza 2* and the laddish, *Gumball Rally*-style madness of *Project Gotham Racing 4*. So, while it faithfully recreates a number of different motorsports (such as Touring Cars, GT racing and Drift competitions), it isn't such a stickler for super-harsh physics or 'one hit and you're out' damage. Which is good, because it allows you to get stuck into some brutal, close-fought races, the likes of which Codemasters have been progressively working on since the days of *TOCA*.

Our preview version of the game didn't include the full career mode (where you start as a driver-for-hire and essentially work your way up to being part of a huge racing team) but even from the small slice of the action we've seen, we're confident this could be one of, if not *the*, racing game of 2008. Hopefully we'll be proved right when the racing begins in earnest this coming summer...

GM

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?
The latest in the *Race Driver* series. It uses the same game engine as *DiRT*.

FACTS
- Will feature over 90 different race circuits including Le Mans
- Includes prestigious car manufacturers such as Aston Martin

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...
Colin McRae: DiRT.....92%
TOCA: Race Driver 3.....91%

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

While the handling leans towards the arcade, it doesn't make the races any less thrilling. It's a visceral, intense experience where your screen will be filled with tyre smoke and hammering over kerbs will result in satisfying thuds as your wheels return to the ground. It's the first game we've played for a long time that has realised that a racing game isn't just about the cars; it's about the sounds, the sights and the danger of motorsport.

ANY PROBLEMS?

We're still in two minds about the flashback device, which lets you rewind time essentially. We've used it in times of crisis, but it still feels like legitimised cheating at odds with the use of damage in the first place.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Leaping down the 'stepped' roads of San Francisco in dashboard view, feeling the crash of the suspension as you lands and keeping the car under control as it squirms upon landing.

The streets of Shibuya, Japan, couldn't be any more different to the city streets of Milan. Anyone know where a decent pizzeria is around here?

Corvettes and Koenigseggs: a high-speed, high-risk GT race.

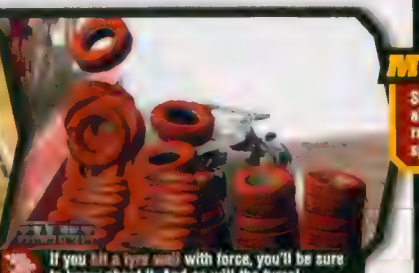
The dockside drift course is a brilliant mode.

TIME TEAM

One of the most controversial features in *Race Driver: GRID* is a Flashback device: the ability to rewind time after an accident that was fatal to your car. By jumping backwards in an instant replay, you can re-attempt a corner so you don't crash. Be warned, though – you can only use this feature three times in a race and not at all in the 'Pro' mode!

The damage model isn't finalised but it's already impressive though...

No 'shiny side up' rules here. Cars can be barrel rolled in spectacular fashion!


If you hit a tyre wall with force, you'll be sure to know about it. And so will the tyres!

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ The feeling of speed and the perpetual danger
+ Lovely front-end graphics

GM HATES
- The high-end GT cars being a bit sensitive
- The career mode being locked out!

MOST WANTED RATING: 5

So far, *Race Driver: GRID* is exceeding all our expectations and has given us racing with a real feeling of thrills and spills. This looks a surefire hit so far.

CAN'T WAIT?
MOST LIKE: PGR4, 93%
BIGGEST RIVAL: Gran Turismo .....5: Prologue, 83%
OUT SOONER: Ferrari Challenge

PS3 • 360 • PC • OUT: LATE 2008 • FORMAT: PS3, PC, 360
DEV: GEARBOX STUDIOS • PUB: SEGA • PLAYERS: 1-4

ALIENS: Colonial Marines

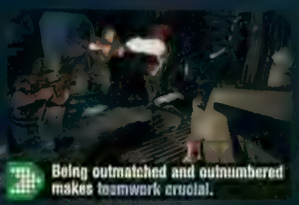
Get ready for another bug hunt...

Even though there's a good chance you weren't born when the original *Alien* film was released, we can bet that you've played an *Alien* game. It's the film that has spawned not only titles on every format from the Sega Game Gear to the Atari Jaguar but has also provided inspiration for virtually every human/alien/spaceship story from *Red Dwarf* to *Doom*.

Even though the *Alien* games of late haven't set the world alight, *Aliens: Colonial Marines* is definitely something to get very excited about – chiefly because Gearbox Studios have taken on the development duties. And Gearbox, as you may know, have been responsible for quite a repertoire of heavy-hitting shooters which, combined with their reported obsessive attention to detail with previous *Alien* source material is great news for fans of the original films.

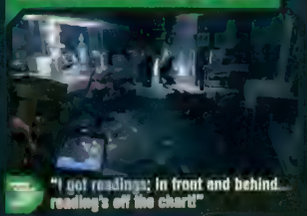
As the name suggests, you'll be taking on the role of a US Colonial Marine, part of a squad who have been charged with stopping a ferocious alien assault. Gameplay-wise, this will result in a story-driven single-player mode, a four-player co-op mode where each player has a distinct role. To add atmosphere there won't be a HUD as you traverse a range of different environments, such as the claustrophobic corridors of the now-abandoned USS Sulaco (the spaceship from *Aliens*) to locations created specially for the storyline of the game.

Sega are keeping schtum about further details (such as if you can play as the aliens and any online deathmatch modes) but we still want to scream with excitement. So loud, in fact, that they'll even *hear us in space*. **Shaun** GM



Being outmatched and outnumbered makes teamwork crucial.

SENSORED



"I got readings; in front and behind... reading's off the chart!"

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?

A shooter based roughly around the time period of *Aliens*, where you take on the role of a Colonial Marine facing an assault from the iconic xenomorphs.

FACTS

Created by the same developers who made the PC port of *Halo*, every *Half-Life 2* expansion pack, Counter-Strike and more.

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...

Counter-Strike: Condition Zero.....76%

Best clear any alien eggs before any Facehuggers appear!

"They're coming outta the walls! They're coming out the goddamned walls!" Thank goodness for the Internet Movie Database website quoting us happy.

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ The potential for intense and claustrophobic corridor battles

GM HATES
- That we don't know much about what the online modes

MOST WANTED RATING

We've played enough alien-in-a-dark-corridor games to know what we want. Gearbox have got plenty left to prove, but we're keen to see more!

4

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: ..... Gears of War, 93%
BIGGEST RIVAL: . Left 4 Dead
OUT SOONER:..... Quake Wars

PS3

OUT: LATE 2008 • FORMAT: PS3 • DEVELOPER: SONY STUDIO LIVERPOOL
PUBLISHER: SONY • PLAYERS: 1-8 • WEBSITE: HTTP://WIPEOUTHD.COM

Wipeout HD

The iconic hovership racer gets the PS3 treatment!

Take a collection of hoverships. Add a rollercoaster circuit, the occasional weapon and drop in a constant, thumping techno soundtrack. This has been the recipe for successful Wipeout games since 1995 and Wipeout HD is no different. In fact, it's not very different at all.

Rather than an overhaul of the concept, developers Studio Liverpool have opted instead for the 'reworking' approach. *Wipeout HD* contains a selection of tracks from previous incarnations in the *Wipeout* series (including all the ships and a number of music tracks from *Wipeout Pulse*) tarted up with the 60 frames-per-second, 1080p High Def brush.

The result, so far, is as you might expect; graphics so crisp and sharp you could cut your fingers on them, running with the sort of silky smoothness you'd demand from the PS3. But, other than that, it's business as usual, save for eight-player online racing, the ability to control the ship with Sixaxis control and a photo mode. While Sony would like us to believe that *Wipeout HD* 'sets a new standard for the future of the iconic anti-gravity racing series', it currently looks to us like one of those dull but pretty DVDs they use to demonstrate TVs in the window of electrical shops. **Shaun** GM

SHIPSHAPE

The AI is particularly aggressive in *Wipeout HD* – which is good because it can [illegible] on the track.

It certainly looks good and fast too. Do we want an evolution of the game?

Do hovercrafts need to pay road tax? Hmmm.

Corners are still tricky but there's handling assistance here.

Don't expect masses of on-screen carnage, but do expect techno!

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ The colours and the high definition graphics
+ Seeing old tracks re-imagined

GM HATES
- That the racing is fast, but not the rollercoaster ride you remembered from years ago

MOST WANTED RATING

If you want online racing and jazzy graphics added to an unchanged Wipeout formula, then that is for you as that's exactly what you'll get.

3

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: ... F-Zero X, 91%
BIGGEST RIVAL: . Mario Kart, 91%
OUT SOONER:. Sonic Riders 2

UNDERDOGS

Below-the-radar ones to watch!

INITIAL D

The Initial D anime and spin-off arcade games have (and still do) present the definitive Touge racing experience. We want it on PS3 now!

TALES OF VESPERIA

Nine games on from GBA title *Tales of Phantasia* and the epic RPG is still going, now with an improved battle system.

BOOM BLOX

With a little help from film director Steven Spielberg, EA are set to release this physics-based kids' puzzle game called *Boom Blox*.

OUT: 20 JULY • PUBLISHER: ATARI • DEVELOPER: HYDRAVISION, EDEN
ONLINE: TBC • WEB: CENTRALDARK.COM • PLAYERS: 1

HANDS ON

PREVIEWER: Rory

HOW FINISHED? 30%

ALONE IN THE DARK

Frights, camera, action – where's the frickin' lightswitch?

Alone in the Dark, the series that can proudly claim to have influenced *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill*, is moving away from survival horror as we know it. This new instalment still features monsters and mayhem, but with the addition of physics-based puzzles and an episodic plot structure, it has as much in common with stumpers such as *Half-Life* and TV shows such as *Lost* as it does with Capcom's zombie-centric series.

The enjoyably cerebral approach to survival is immediately evident in the game's opening scenes as Carnby (the hero of the piece) rappels his way down a lift shaft swinging to avoid spouts of flame. Later he sees off the baddies (undead New Yorkers in thrall to an ancient evil called the Fissure who are unfazed by bullets) by taping a fuel bottle and flare combo to a hotdog stand and kicking it down a hill into the oncoming hordes.

KING FISSURE?

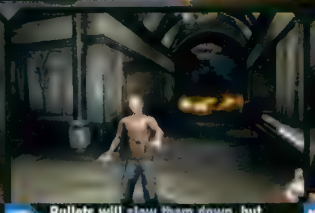
Further in and the survivors race through the metropolis' rapidly disintegrating streets in a commandeered car (all of the vehicles in the game are at least accessible if not road worthy) as other vehicles cartwheel overhead.

There are problems, though: the ingenious DIY approach to armaments – seemingly only limited by the player's imagination – is currently forced to rough it with sluggish movement and melee combat, and a camera that seems more concerned with showcasing the next explosive set-piece than exploration. But it's a breathless sequence of events that in two 'episodes' manages to pack in more thrills than the countless US TV series it emulates could manage in seasons. GM

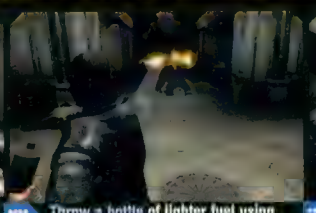
THE FLAME GAME

The impressive fire physics in *Alone in the Dark* play a central part in many of the puzzles, but they're also key to killing the combustible Fissure creatures.

The Fissure's minions can sprout from cracks in the ground.



Bullets will slow them down, but after a while they'll get back up.



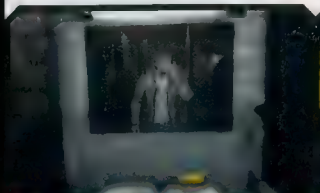
Throw a bottle of lighter fuel using the handy aiming mechanism...

... and shoot it at just the right moment to make it go boom.

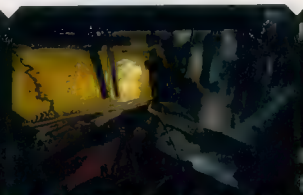
Whatever you do, don't look down – cliffhangers are common (and sometimes literal) in the game's episodic plot.

THINK ABOUT IT

Carnby may not remember who he is but he's a clever chap nonetheless. There's a heavy emphasis on problem solving rather than puzzles, and there's even the option to skip sections if you get stuck.



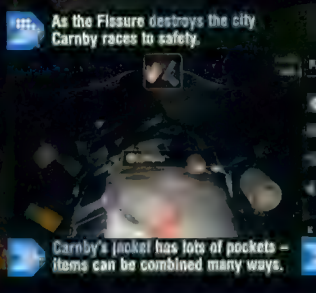
Carnby has no memory of who or where he is. You'll help him find out.



Puzzles require you to use your body weight, cables, fire and brute force.

As the Fissure destroys the city Carnby races to safety.

Fire is your friend – use it to kill enemies and light your way ahead.



Carnby's jacket has lots of pockets – items can be combined many ways.

At any time less skilled players can skip chapters, just like a DVD!

CONTROLS

Left thumbstick - Movement
Right thumbstick - Alter position of held item/ melee attack
D-pad - jacket/inventory
LT - lock on
RT - Fire
A – Pick up item/run

WE PLAYED IT AT...

GM's offices

WHAT WE PLAYED

✓ Episodes one and two

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Initially it feels very much like a traditional third-person action game combining combat, platforming and puzzles using an economical control system. Later on the addition of physics- and fire-based puzzles gives this a more interesting edge that rewards experimentation in much the same way as *Half-Life* and *Portal*. Add in a brilliantly structured, action-propelled plot and we have a real contender here...

ANY PROBLEMS?

It needs some work still: the movement is slow and melee combat – handled with a left-to-right or up-down movement of the control stick – feels imprecise. Also the blurred vision caused by Carnby's injuries is an irritating innovation too far that seems to serve no purpose.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Tossing an aerosol can before making it explode with a well-timed bullet is an extremely rewarding way to take care of enemies – and that's only the simplest of explosive solutions to Carnby's problems.

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ A brilliantly structured action plot
+ Inventive use of items
+ Fantastic fire effects

GM HATES

- Annoying blurred vision
- The inconsistent camera

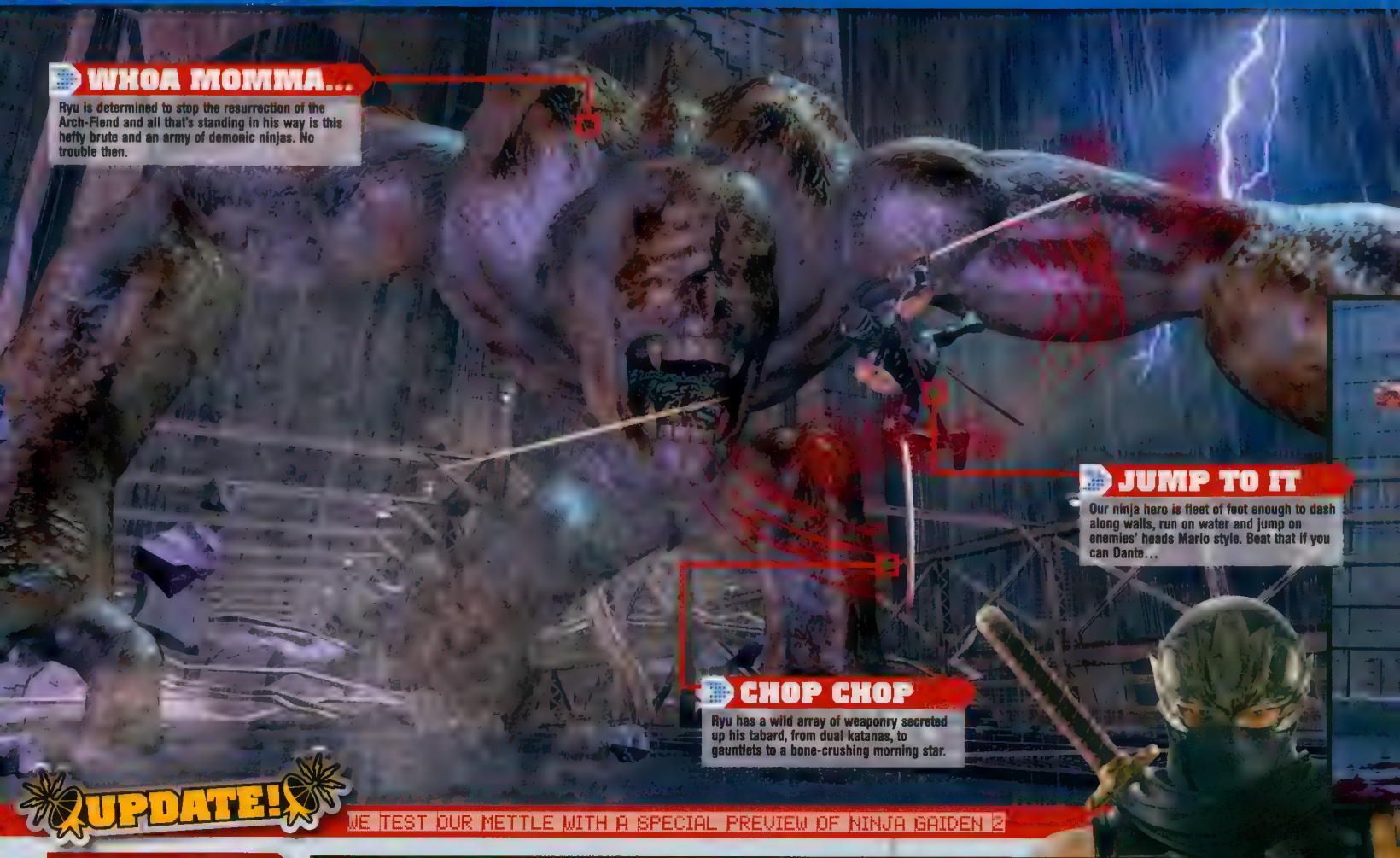
MOST WANTED RATING

Alone in the Dark is a hugely inventive action game, but will its ambitions exceed its grasp? If not, this *could* be one of the best action games in years.

4

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .....Half-Life and Resi (no, really)
BIGGEST RIVAL: ..Silent Hill 5
OUT SOONER:.....MGS 4



WHOA MOMMA...
Ryu is determined to stop the resurrection of the Arch-Fiend and all that's standing in his way is this hefty brute and an army of demonic ninjas. No trouble then.

JUMP TO IT
Our ninja hero is fleet of foot enough to dash along walls, run on water and jump on enemies' heads Mario style. Beat that if you can Dante...

CHOP CHOP
Ryu has a wild array of weaponry secreted up his tabard, from dual katanas, to gauntlets to a bone-crushing morning star.

UPDATE! WE TEST OUR METTLE WITH A SPECIAL PREVIEW OF NINJA GAIDEN 2

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?

The long awaited sequel to one of the best (and toughest) action games ever.

FACTS

- A wide variety of weaponry to get to grips with
- A new self-replenishing health bar
- Massively tough bosses built like Sherman tanks
- Intuitive combat system and free running like platforming bits
- New easier Path of the Acolyte mode

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...

Ninja Gaiden..... 88%
Dead or Alive 4..... 85%

OUT: JUNE **PUBLISHER:** MICROSOFT **DEVELOPER:** TEAM NINJA/TECMO **ONLINE:** SHARE
GAMEPLAY MOVIES ONLINE **WWW:** XBOX.COM/EN-US/GAMES/SPLASH/M/NINJAGAIDEN2 **PLAYERS:** 1

NINJA GAIDEN II

Prepare to die – several thousand times over...

Ninja Gaiden for the Xbox was so hard it had many a games reviewer crying with his head in his hands. "You've had it easy," it mocked, "now learn the meaning of pain as I pummel you into wasabi paste with my nunchucks." And that was just the first level. But here at *GM* we've never shied away from a challenge so we polished up our shurikens, fired up our preview copy of *Ninja Gaiden 2* and prepared for battle...

Ninjas have been a videogame staple since games came on tape. But Tecmo have just about managed to keep *NG2* on the fresher side of familiar, thanks largely to the brutal combat. This time Ryu Hayabusa can take on gaggles of ninjas in one go with a cocktail of sword slashes, kicks, leaps and dashes – often leaving severed limbs in his wake. The gore is over the top in a Quentin Tarantino sort of way, but Ryu's ruthless finishing moves feel entirely justified when a recently mutilated ninja approaches with a kamikaze glint in his eye and an exploding shuriken in his pocket. It's very accessible with combos coming easily – a plus if *Devil May Cry 4*'s neverending cycle of button presses left you cold.

But there's a significant problem with *NG2* at the moment that sucks some of the joy out of the slaughter. The game's camera seems permanently distracted – it's like viewing the game through the eyes of an excitable but nervous tourist. Enter a room full of arrow-flinging madmen and Ninja-cam lurks in the corridor; take on a platoon of ninjas and Ninja-cam will point straight at the foliage of a blossom tree; but get in a big room with a bigger boss and he'll point straight at you. It's maddening.

NINJA WHINGER

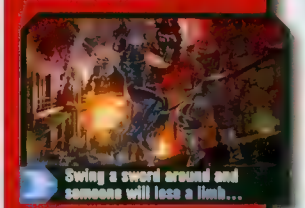
And yes, it's still punishingly difficult, even with the addition of a slightly easier mode. With most modern games taking mere days to complete it's quite nice to get in touch with our inner ninja. *NG2* is shaping up well and if the wrinkles are ironed out this could be the masochistic thrill-ride to equal *DMC4*. GM

"IF THE WRINKLES ARE IRONED OUT THIS COULD BE THE MASOCHISTIC THRILL-RIDE TO RIVAL DMC4"

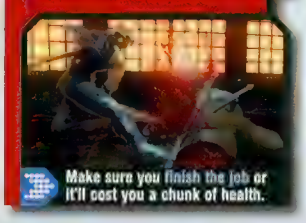
Ryu Hayabusa: A nimble ninja from the Dragon Clan. He's dead hard you know.

LEGLESS

Even shorn of limbs, Ryu's ninja foes can frolic about like newborn lambs – newborn lambs with explosives that is. You can finish them off with a simple press of B, but take your eyes off of them and they'll pin you down with a kamikaze attack.



Swing a sword around and someone will lose a limb...



Make sure you finish the job or it'll cost you a chunk of health.

HANDS ON

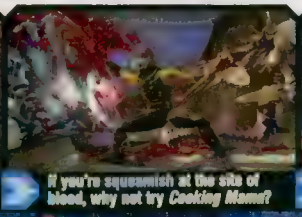
PREVIEWER: Rory

HOW FINISHED? 70%

GUTSY

Ninja Gaiden 2 sure is gory what with all those limbs, heads and unidentifiable lumps of gristle flying about – it'll definitely be given an 18 certificate. But the claret-letting is so cartoonishly plentiful it all feels a bit tongue-in-cheek.

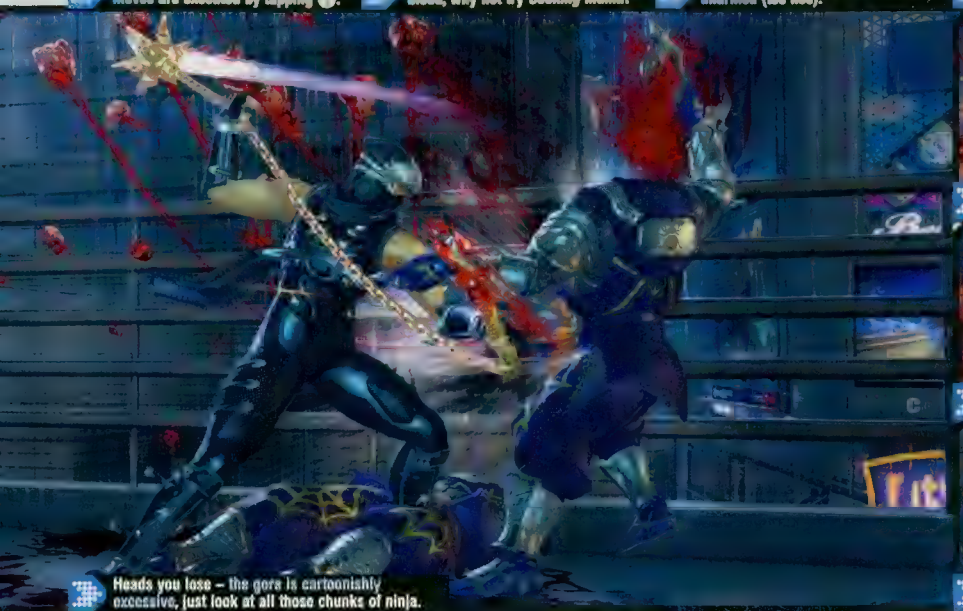
Kerspla! Ryu's effective finishing moves are executed by tapping B.



If you're squeamish at the site of blood, why not try *Cooking Mama*?

That's hardly fair, he was clearly unarmed (too bad).

It's a small detail but we love how Ryu's weapons get smeared with blood.



Heads you lose – the gore is cartoonishly excessive, just look at all those chunks of ninja.

Red mist – Ryu's weaponry allows him to tackle many foes at once.

We hope Ryu's outfit is wipe clean – blood is a nightmare to get out.

It's not just the red stuff being spilled; snotty demon blood is plentiful too.

Remember: the bigger they are the easier they'll find it to squash you.

Oof! Ryu is pretty handy in a fight – but you'll still die lots...

Bigger weapons are slower but can deal massive amounts of damage.

As well as ninjas Ryu has to fend off all manner of demons too.

BIG BAD

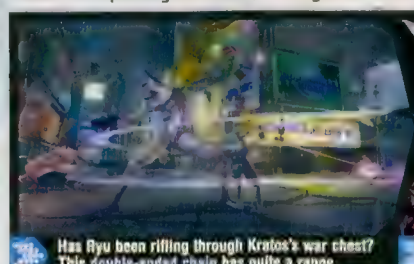
If you think Sir Alan Sugar looks like a tough boss, approach this game with caution. The big boys in this game are enormous and extremely tough to dispatch – best stock up on plenty of health pick-ups.

The first level's spider ninja boss recurs throughout and doesn't seem to get any easier – sadly a rolled-up newspaper is unlikely to see him off.

A word in your ear! The size of this boss will draw on Ryu's incredible agility as much as his prowess with weaponry.

GET THE POINT?

At Ryu's disposal is an array of pointy implements, blunt objects and lethal projectiles – just the job for felling demons. Among the best we've seen are exploding shurikens, a nasty chain-like weapon and a bizarre set of razor-mounted gauntlets with matching boots.



Has Ryu been rifling through Kratos's war chest? This double-ended chain has quite a range.

Dual wielding katana blades – Ryu wields 'em like a ninja-powered set of rotor blades.

The clawed gloves and boots are picked up early on and make use of Ryu's agility.

CONTROLS

Left stick - Movement
Right stick - Camera
LT - guard
LB - 1st person view
RT - Centre camera
D-pad - Inventory
X - Light attack
Y - Fierce attack
A - Jump
B - Projectile attack

WE PLAYED IT AT...

The *GM* office.

WHAT WE PLAYED

- ✔ The first four levels
- ✔ Path of the Acolyte (hard) mode
- ✔ Path of the Warrior (very, very hard) mode

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

It's still tough but a new health system softens the blow. Ryu's energy can be depleted rapidly in combat but by clearing an area, much of what was lost is restored. However, each attack he sustains will turn a little of the gauge red, and this portion can only be restored by the infrequent pick-ups and even-less-frequent save points. The combat flows nicely and the controls are economical despite the vast moves list.

ANY PROBLEMS?

The camera is a nightmare at the moment as it often points in the wrong direction at the wrong moment. You can centre the camera behind Ryu, but this isn't always adequate. Also the jump controls feel unresponsive.

BEST BIT SO FAR

The thumpety-thunk as a newly severed head rolls down some steps – it's not big or clever but it made us laugh.

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES

- + Meaty combat
- + New easier, but still solid, mode
- + Running on water

GM HATES

- – That useless camera
- – Slightly unresponsive jumps

MOST WANTED RATING

If the camera problems are fixed by the developers then this could be a brutal and brilliant action game to give *Devil May Cry 4* a run for its moolah.

4

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: Ninja Gaiden, 88%
BIGGEST RIVAL: ..Metal Gear ..... Solid 4 (June)
OUT SOONER: Iron Man, see p68

Ahh, we remember when all this was eye-hurting green polygons. What a healthy metropolis we've grown here.

OUT: TBC • PUB: SQUARE ENIX • DEV: SQUARE ENIX
• WEB: WWW.SQUARE-ENIX.COM • PLAYERS: 1

FINAL FANTASY: CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: MY LIFE AS A KING

HELP?

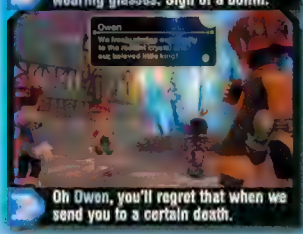
You're not alone in your quest. The kids that find the city with you soon become your closest advisors. One will highlight the needs of the citizens while another offers questing help. Head them, but it is not advice.

Player casts cement mixer. Gains +1 house...

Watch out Xbox Live Arcade, Nintendo's WiiWare service has you in its sights, and with *Crystal Chronicles* they've got a real shiny bullet – not an RPG, but a *SimCity*-ish town planner. You use mystical powers to grow buildings from the ground while organising warriors into search parties to leave the city and collect the crystals that make your magic possible.

It's near enough to a full-on title, and with downloadable content to come as well – you can use Wii Points to purchase new races to move into your town – it's a game that just keeps on giving. Matthew GM

She knows the answers: she's wearing glasses. Sign of a boffin.



Oh Owen, you'll regret that when we send you to a certain death.

MOST WANTED RATING 4

A change of direction for *Final Fantasy*, but a successful one. Matching the right citizen to the right task is challenging stuff and seeing your city slowly sprout is hugely satisfying. The best looking WiiWare title to boot.

• DUE: SEPTEMBER • DEVELOPER: SANDBLAST GAMES • PUBLISHER: THQ
• WEB: DESTROYALLHUMANSGAME.COM • ONLINE: CO-OP, VERSUS MULTIPLAYER • PLAYERS: 1-12

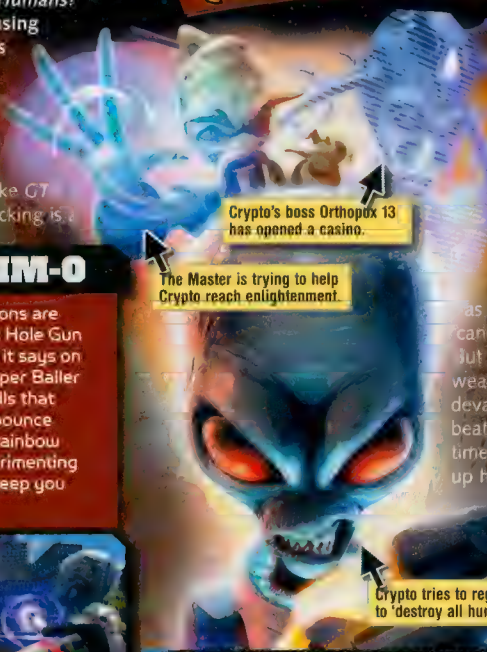
DESTROY ALL HUMANS!® Path of the Furon

An out of this world adventure!

So *Big Willy Unleashed* isn't amazing, but this is by a different team so don't write off *Path Of The Furon* just yet. We recently played it at THQ's Gamer's Day. There wasn't much hype surrounding the fourth *Destroy All Humans!* game, but after causing havoc in the game's second setting we were impressed.

Path Of The Furon doesn't have the credentials to challenge a game like *GTIV* but what it is packing is a bucket-load of fun. Our favourite alien Crypto has warped back to the 1970s in search of self-enlightenment, and he's brought a few new toys along for the ride.

All the old favourites are back, the Ion Detonator gun has [illegible] body-snatching's as great as ever, and the UFO can lay waste to entire cities. But now you can combine weapons for even more devastation. Sure it's no *GTA* beater, but when you can stop time and use Psychokinesis to set up hilarious situations or feed a Venus Human Trap all day, who really cares? Matthew P GM



Crypto's boss Orthopox 13 has opened a casino.

The Master is trying to help Crypto reach enlightenment.

Crypto tries to regain the will to 'destroy all humans'.

UF-AMM-O

Some of the weapons are brilliant. The Black Hole Gun does exactly what it says on the tin, and the Super Baller launches sticky balls that attach to people, bounce around and leave rainbow trails behind. Experimenting with them all will keep you busy for hours.

Clump people together like magnets, stick a bomb to them and... throw!

Now freeze time and place a car over her head for rib-tickling results.

So many large weapons... Just how big are Crypto's pockets exactly?

Some missions ask you to cause a set amount of damage within a certain time. Blast those skyscrapers. Great fun!

MOST WANTED RATING 3

Path of the Furon is a perfect reminder of what many games have forgotten about: the fun that can be had by enabling big-head modes and crazy weaponry. This could be the perfect complement to serious sandbox games.

GM MOST WANTED GAMES

GAMES MAKING YOU DRIBBLE WITH EXCITEMENT!

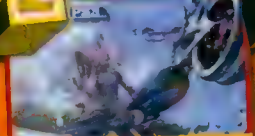
The release schedules are full to bursting with games that are making us drool with anticipation. And here at *GM* we want to hear which ones you can't wait to get your hands on. Drop us an email to: gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk

NAME: Lolzord
AGE: 16
FROM: York
FAVOURITE FILM: Pan's Labyrinth

1 SUPER SMASH BROS BRAWL

I absolutely love this series. I think the original was one of the best games ever made, but this looks even better.

2 FINAL FANTASY 13



Simply because it's *Final Fantasy*! Can't wait for this – you can just tell that it's going to be immense.

3 GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

Well it's the new *Grand Theft Auto*, of course I want to play it, nuff said. (*GM*: You know its 18-rated, right?)

4 PROTOTYPE

Explore and destroy the whole of New York as a badass Hoodie-wearing guy with super powers.

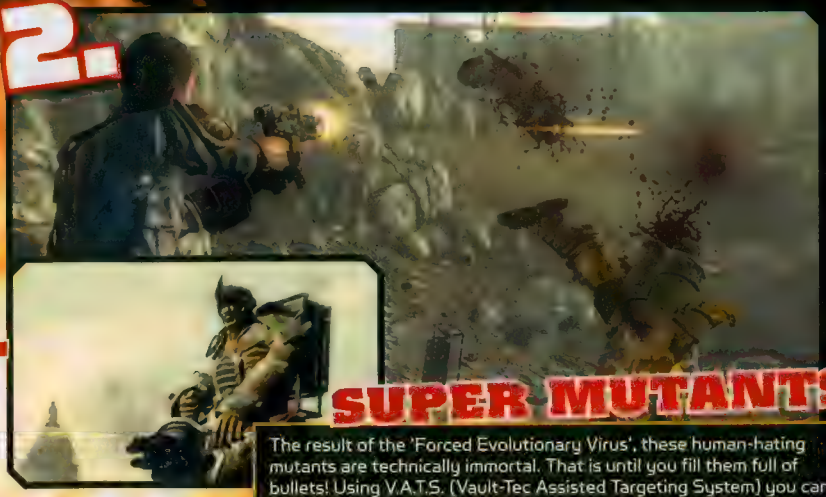
5 FALLOUT 3

Oblivion was brilliant, and this is shaping up to be even better! And choosing your own path is always good.

Fallout 3

1. BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL

Love the body armour! These guys are like the medieval knights of a post-apocalyptic America. Obsessed with technology they wage a constant war against the Super Mutants to keep peace-loving humans safe from harm.



2. SUPER MUTANTS

The result of the 'Forced Evolutionary Virus', these human-hating mutants are technically immortal. That is until you fill them full of bullets! Using V.A.T.S. (Vault-Tec Assisted Targeting System) you can slow time and pinpoint specific parts of the body to attack, and battles play like real-time firefights. Expect gore levels to be at an all-time high with some particularly gruesome deaths to savour!

360 PS3 PC ■ DUE: AUTUMN ■ DEVELOPER: BETHESDA ■ PUBLISHER: BETHESDA ■ WEB: HTTP://FALLOUT.BETHSOFT.COM/INDEX.HTML ■ PLAYERS: 1

The top five reasons why this will be *the* RPG of 2008!

If there's one thing *Team GM* can agree on it's that anything post-apocalyptic is *brilliant*! *Planet of the Apes*, *Mad Max* (okay maybe not the Tina Turner bits), *I Am Legend* – it's safe to say we're BIG fans of anything set after some terrible disaster. So when the people who made the amazing *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* announced a sequel to one of our favourite post-apocalyptic things (that'll be *Fallout*) we got very excited.

Just think! Another huge open world to explore, a grim sci-fi setting, the chance to iron out some of *Oblivion*'s kinks - and plenty more besides...**Geraint**

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?

A free-roaming RPG set in an America that's been ravaged by nuclear war...

FACTS

- Search for your father after he leaves the safety of an underground bunker
- *Oblivion*-style overworld, where you can travel wherever you want
- Real-time battle system with the ability to pause for tactical decisions

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...

Elder Scrolls 4: Oblivion..... 93%
Star Trek: Legacy 78%

3. THE WASTELAND

Quality over quantity this time. While not *quite* as big as *Oblivion*, the game world will be much more detailed. Seeing Washington in ruins is a sight to behold, as are the creepy burnt-out suburbs...

4. GM MOST WANTED GAME

PIP BOY

Useful *and* hilarious, this '50s-styled wrist-mounted chunk-o-watch deals with all aspects of your character, from levelling up, to your inventory. It can even function as a light source in total darkness. We love the *BioShock*-style ability descriptions, which inject some much needed humour into your otherwise miserable existence!

5. LOST THE PLOT?

The Brotherhood of Steel look terrifying – but they're guardians of the peace...

As much as we found them (unintentionally) hilarious at times, the non-player characters in *Oblivion* were gibbering simpletons! Expect stronger dialogue here (voiced by more people, including Liam Neeson as the voice of your father!) and more realistic human behaviour. The range of quests on offer will also be much broader – no more plundering identikit dungeons here!

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ Nuclear War! Mutants! Loads of Gore!
+ It's a sci-fi *Oblivion*!

GM HATES

- That it'll be some time before it's finished...

MOST WANTED RATING: 5

It's already one of the greatest RPG series of all time – and now console gamer's will get a taste of its brilliance. Even better, *Oblivion* duvs Bethesda are making it!

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: ....Oblivion, 93%
BIGGEST RIVAL: Borderlands
OUT SOONER:..... Too Human
..... (autumn)

Sadly water wings aren't allowed in Olympic swimming events.

PC • OUT: SUMMER • PUB: SEGA • DEV: EUROCOM
• WEB: OLYMPICVIDEOGAMES.COM • PLAYERS/ONLINE: 1-16

BEIJING 2008

THE OFFICIAL VIDEO GAME OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Going for gold on the big formats!

The decision to hold this year's Olympic Games in Beijing has stirred up a political hornets' nest, but that doesn't detract from the sheer spectacle of the world's largest sporting event. And Sega's official game tie-in should reflect that with the addition of some shiny next-gen visuals and a new online multiplayer mode.

IN TOUCH

At present we can only speculate how the controls will work, but Sega have already limbered up with *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games* so the expectations are high.

Shooting events should be a doddle for shooter fans, shouldn't they?

Will swimming consist of button bashing or something innovative?

ON TRACK

Yes, for the first time ever in an Olympics game players will be able to emulate their sporting heroes by competing against the rest of the world in a variety of disciplines. The game will feature 35 diverse events from swimming to track events, and Sega are promising innovative control schemes for each. The look of the game will reflect the vibrant surroundings of this year's event as it'll all take place in innovative new venues the Beijing National Stadium (otherwise known as the Bird Nest) and the National Aquatics Centre (aka: the Water Cube).

With Olympic fever set to grip the UK in August Sega's title may present fans with the possibility of nabbing Britain a few more gold medals than the usual few... **Rory** GM

MOST WANTED RATING 3

A chance to compete online in our own gaming Olympics is too good an opportunity to miss – but will the game fulfil our expectations?

• OUT: 20 MAY • PUBLISHER: EIDOS • DEVELOPER: FUNCOM • GENRE: PERSISTENT WORLD
• WEB: WWW.AGEOFCONAN.COM • PLAYERS: SOMEWHERE BETWEEN MANY AND ULTRA-MANY

AGE OF CONAN

HYBORIAN ADVENTURES

Get your loincloth out for this online fantasy game!

For any developers entering the field of fantasy online RPGs, it's got to be intimidating. You've got 10-million-strong giants in the form of *World of Warcraft* to face after all. However, *Age of Conan* has a few sword-strikes planned so that even if it doesn't kill its monstrous foe, it'll hopefully draw new blood.

Conan's an adult multiplayer online game. So rather than Blizzard's cartoon world, we have nudity and decapitations worked in alongside all the online-RPG standards. This is more than just surface level stuff – the devs are trying to stress the importance of the plot, with proper cutscenes and multiple conversation options – the sort of stuff you'd probably expect to see in a BioWare RPG.

Also, as the approach date inches ever closer, Funcom – veterans of *Anarchy Online*, one of the first successful RPGs after *Everquest* – are showing off some of their other features. For example, mounted combat. In most games of this sort, your mount is just a thing to help you get from A to B to sell gold and the like, disappearing when things look a little rough. Not here – you're able to charge into battle, getting a damage bonus from your velocity on horseback. And it's not even just horseback – there's rhinoback and elephantback to consider, which swaps your attacks for the beast's own.

For a game inspired by a barbarian, there's also a surprisingly civilised endgame here too. Clans can construct their own cities at great expense, full of shops and workplaces. Of course, that civilisation can end up going to pot when a hostile clan turns up and lays siege, but that's just one of the joys of the Hyborian lifestyle. **Kieron** GM

TOO HUMAN?

Conan is unusual in that all the player characters are humans in the game. But not all humans are created equal...

Aquilonians are roughly based on the Romans; they're more civilized.

Cimmerians are loosely inspired by Norse vikings. Conan's one of these.

Stygian are a riff on the Egyptians, and a bunch of snake-worshippers.

It features fighting – an original feature we think could catch on.

With the variety of steeds, it's probably wise to never take a horse to a rhino race. Assuming it's a 'race' involving violence. Otherwise, a nippy horse may suffice.

MOST WANTED RATING 3

While there's a lot about Conan which excites, it's entering a busy field. Will the adult tone and the atmosphere of Hyboria be enough to make it stand apart from the mass of online fantasy worlds? Here's hoping...

GERAINT'S WORLD OF THE STRANGE

We dive head first into the weird and wonderful – so you don't have to!

MABINOGI

(Out: TBC) Check http://mabinogi.nexon.net for details!

In the leek midwinter...

Now here's something you don't see every day – a Massively Multiplayer Online RPG, made in Korea, but based on the ancient stories of, um... Wales! Yes, WALES! More specifically, the name comes from the 'Mabinogion' – Welsh tales of romance, kings and the odd bit of good old fashioned killing!

Unfortunately for Welsh boyo Geraint, that's where the Welsh-love stops. True, it's heavy on the Celtic themes, but it's got naff all to do with leeks or close harmony singing. Nope, it's all about questing RPG-style, making clothes, sitting round campfires and hitting spiders.

Still, on the plus side, it's actually looking rather good. Unlike other MMORPG's it's free to play, not heavy on the dungeoneering, with plenty of crafting, magic learning and composing to be done. It's currently only available in the US and Korea but expect a Euro release soon!

PS3 • OUT: WINTER 2008 • DEVELOPER: VOLITION INC • PUBLISHER: THQ • ONLINE: VERSUS MULTIPLAYER
WEB: VOLITION-INC.COM • PLAYERS: 1-12

RED FACTION GUERRILLA

Just what is it about Mars that makes everybody see red?

Strap on your time machine boots because it's time to go back seven years and remember a PS2 shooter still dear to us: *Red Faction*. Why? Because it's back. Of sorts.

Taking a leaf from *Saints Row*'s book, *Red Faction Guerrilla* drags the series into a different genre by setting its tale of rebellion in an open world. *Guerrilla* is the true sequel to *Red Faction*, ditching the Earth story of the second game and returning to Mars instead. It's been 50 years since the Red Faction toppled the evil Ultor Corporation, letting the Earth Defence Force (EDF) take over, but it seems that things are no better than when we left. Which by our reckoning is the perfect excuse for the miners of Mars to resurrect the Red Faction and stick it to 'the man' once more...

MINERS STRIKE

Your role in it all is quite simple: kill the bad guys and destroy as much as you can. Playing as humble miner Alec Mason, your job is to rally citizens by intercepting EDF convoys, destroying safe houses and rescuing hostages. Think *Saints Row* with miners instead of gangs and you're basically there.

There's enough equipment to help you do it too. The default weapon is a sledgehammer – capable of smashing skulls and felling buildings with ease – but there are mines, rocket launchers and even robot walkers that allow you to charge straight through buildings. The Geo-Mod technology that let us blow the scenery to tiny chunks hasn't bridged the generation gap but in its place is a system that is arguably more impressive. Every building can be taken apart brick by brick and, thanks to some clever maths, the structures are all load bearing and so fall apart just like they would in real life. Smashing! **Matthew** GM

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?

An open world action game with an emphasis on breaking buildings apart and causing mayhem by employing guerrilla tactics. A bit like *Mercenaries*.

FACTS

- The Walker robots (think of the *Aliens* Power Loader) come in all shapes and sizes; from large, destructive behemoths to small, nimble machines capable of jumping
- The multiplayer destruction isn't as realistic as single-player destruction so that games last longer than they would otherwise

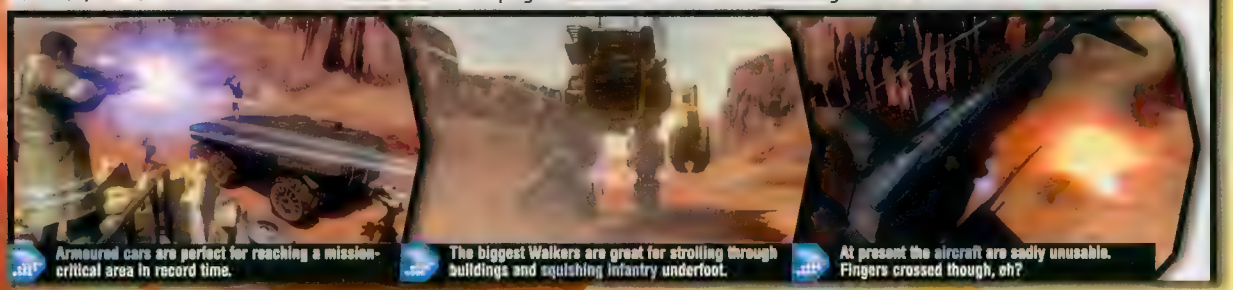
FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...

Red Faction 90%
Saints Row 80%

"YOUR ROLE IN IT IS QUITE SIMPLE: KILL THE BAD GUYS AND DESTROY AS MUCH AS YOU CAN"

TANNED THEFT AUTO

In keeping with traditional open world gameplay Alec is able to traverse the red planet by jumping into almost any vehicle, whether it's Red Faction, EDF or citizen. There are even times when a non-player character will take the wheel and you have to man a mounted turret.



Armoured cars are perfect for reaching a mission-critical area in record time.

The biggest Walkers are great for strolling through buildings and squishing infantry underfoot.

At present the aircraft are sadly unusable. Fingers crossed though, eh?

DESTROY EVERYTHING!

Alec's a threat whether he's behind the wheel (or should that be joystick?) of a Walker, in possession of a grenade launcher or simply using his sledgehammer. Unlike other games, Red Faction Guerrilla doesn't replace building blocks with damaged pieces – it calculates the impact of every hit and reassess the building's structural integrity. It means towers come crashing down if you just target a couple of support beams!

Cars don't bounce off walls, they smash through them.

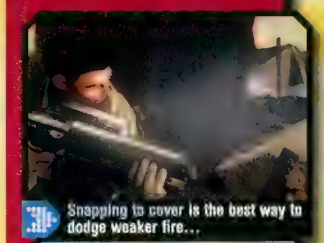
Shoulder buttons let you swipe at structures just to your side.

This isn't an uncommon sight even when using just the hammer.

The fire and smoke effects are simply breathtaking.

STAY SAFE

The odds are stacked firmly against our hero. This is EDF turf, and as a result you're outgunned, outnumbered and outarmoured (shhh, it's a word if we want it to be). How do you cope then with the EDF army? A little common sense will do the trick...



Snapping to cover is the best way to dodge weaker fire...

...but hop into a Walker and it doesn't matter what your foes do.

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ Incredible physics
+ Driving a Walker
+ Multiplayer modes

GM HATES
- Areas with little happening
- No Geo-Mod tech

MOST WANTED RATING 4

Although everybody is busy talking about *Saints Row 2* we'd argue that its sci-fi cousin is looking just as strong. Red Faction is back with a bang!

CAN'T WAIT?
MOST LIKE: Mercenaries, 90%
BIGGEST RIVAL: Mercenaries 2
OUT SOONER:... Saints Row 2 .....(26 August)

OUT: AUTUMN • DEVELOPER: SWORDFISH STUDIOS • PUBLISHER: VIVENDI
ONLINE: 1-2 PLAYER COOPERATIVE • WEB: 50BLOODONTHESAND.COM • PLAYERS: 1-2

50 CENT: BLOOD ON THE SAND

Fiddy and G-Unit blast up the hood, beyond the hood...

Former drug dealer 50 Cent's real name is Curtis.

Fiddy famously survived a close-range shooting in real life.

The use of cover isn't exclusive to Fiddy so it pays to aim carefully.

Throughout his life, music and film career 50 Cent has emphasised that he doesn't suffer fools gladly. With tracks such as *I'll Still Kill* and *My Gun Go Off* it's clear he's not afraid to express his anger. So it's extremely unlikely that a music promoter would ever have the temerity to not pay Fiddy any appearance money owed.

Well, believe it or not, we begin this sequel to 2005's *Bulletproof* with this exact scenario. Some idiot has stiffed Fiddy and the G-Unit of their hard-earned cash after a gig in a fictional war-torn country leaving them with no choice but to hunt the dog down and get what's owed. Efficiently done, 50 is rewarded with a diamond-encrusted skull for his troubles. But people just don't learn not to mess with the platinum-selling mumbler and a local crime lord swipes the skull and legs it.

So after not getting paid, then getting paid, then having that pay taken away from them the G-Unit are extremely ticked off, so much so that they forget about the small claims court and go straight for the shooters in this explosive third-person action game.

Bulletproof, 50's original game, was a rather ugly, poorly-put-together experience. This follow-up should prove to be far more satisfying as the developers Swordfish Studios, who made the interesting and technically tight shooter *Cold Winter*, have gone for a comic book arcadey action game that's part *Call of Duty*, part *Total Overdose*. It'll also include driving and flying sections, which were included in the game at the request of Mr Cent himself.

We're hopeful that this combination of gameplay and the quality that Swordfish can bring will mean *Blood on the Sand* will merit the large sales 50 Cent's large following will virtually guarantee. **Dave** GM

"THE DEVELOPERS HAVE GONE FOR A COMIC BOOK ARCADEY ACTION GAME"

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?

A third-person shooter starring everybody's favourite shrapnel-shredded rapper 50 Cent, who's on the hunt for a crime lord who's crossed him.

FACTS

- Drop-in co-operative play
- Four playable characters
- To feature new 50 Cent tracks

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...

Hostile Waters 92%
Rugby Challenge 2006 ..... 77%

As a next-gen game *Blood on the Sand* holds its own in terms of visuals.

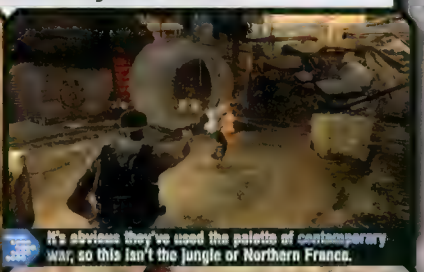
He can't resist tilting the Uzi sideways – gang habits die hard.

There's nothing subtle about the action – this is 50 Cent as a superhuman soldier.

ON DANGEROUS GROUND

You won't be blasting through 50's native New York, but as for the exact setting of the game, we're not sure. It's been described as a 'fictional war-torn country', that's a 'blend of cultural influences', also as 'the hood beyond the hood'...

They wanted to move 50 Cent away from the conventional urban setting and the exotic look suits the 'comic-book' feel.



It's obvious they've used the palette of contemporary war, so this isn't the jungle or Northern France.

The country has been overrun by international crimelords. Expect French and Russian thugs.

G-WHIZZ

As ever 50 has the G-Unit to back him up in the form of DJ Whoo Kid, Tony Yayo and Lloyd Banks. Each character has an identical move set, including the counter-kills. It's up to you which one you want to join 50 in combat, either as an AI teammate or being controlled by a pal for some drop-in co-operative play.

Here's Lloyd Banks getting involved. Your friend can play as him in co-op.

Tony Yayo is so hard he doesn't even need cover – just a floppy hat.

Here's DJ Whoo Kid. You get points for reviving your pals too.

KILLER BEATS

When 50 Cent gets too close to an opponent to use guns effectively he can activate a counter-kill, which is a set-piece execution that must be completed by rhythmically hitting the correct action buttons.

The idea is to unlock more and more counter-kills during the game, then assign the moves to slots so you can tailor 50's style of slaughter to suit your tastes.

All the moves have been choreographed by an ex-special forces soldier and allow 50 Cent to demonstrate what a bad-ass he is with a knife or fist.

IN DA CLUB

Blood on the Sand is a cover shooter in the mould of *Gears of War* but it also shares some elements with *The Club* in the way that it encourages and rewards the building up of kills. You're constantly racking up points for chain kills, head shots, high accuracy and use of counter kills, which means the action is kept fast paced and arcadey.

Being behind cover is crucial, but this doesn't mean it's instant death once you're in the open.

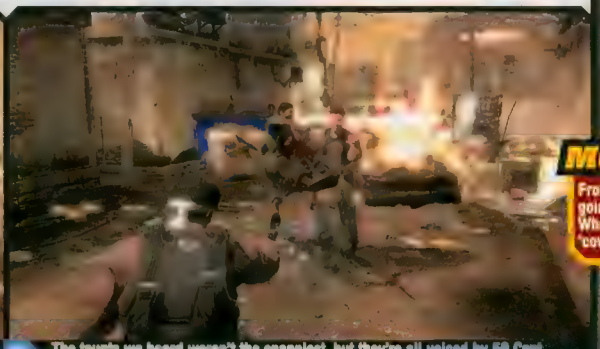
Each character can carry and swap between four weapons at a time.

The in-game view is very busy, with points racking up and icons for each kill popping up.

GANGSTER FLAME

If you keep the points building up you'll also build up 50's Gangster Flame, that when activated slows down the action but maintains 50's speed. This allows you to pull off spectacular moves such as sending an opponent flying with a grenade then shooting them as they soar.

You can add more points to your tally by taunting while you're shooting at the enemy – just like in *Scarface*.



The taunts we heard weren't the snappiest, but they're all voiced by 50 Cent himself. They're not rap lyrics either and every other line doesn't rhyme.

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ Building up combos
+ Its bold look

GM HATES

- That it's humourless
- That it's exploitative

MOST WANTED RATING

From what we've seen this is definitely going to be an improvement on *Bulletproof*. Whether it can challenge other established 'cover-shooters' we'll have to see.

3

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: ..... The Club, 86%
BIGGEST RIVAL: Call of Duty 4, ... 93%
OUT SOONER: Dark Sector, 78%

OUT: JUNE • DEV: VENOM GAMES • PUB: 2K • WEB: HTTP://2KSPORTS.COM/GAMES/PRIZEFIGHTER • PLAYERS: 1-2

Fights start off in shabby training gyms such as this one.

Take a 'knee' to regain vital health and continue the fight...

DON KING PRESENTS PRIZEFIGHTER

Becoming Don's king of the ring...

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?

A traditional boxing game told with a documentary-style storyline.

FACTS

- Fast and furious boxing action
- Features top ranking boxers from the last five decades, including Joe Calzaghe and Rocky Marciano

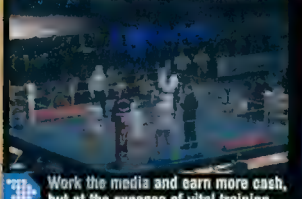
FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...

Rocky 80%
Rocky Legends 82%

FIT CLUB

For the Wii version, 2K hopes to be able to incorporate not just the Wii-mote, but the Wii Balance Board into training minigames. An interesting prospect that could be applied to the actual fighting too...

Traditional button press punches offer fast-paced and intense fights.



Work the media and earn more cash, but at the expense of vital training.

We had a lot of questions about *Don King Presents: Prizefighter* and, after witnessing the game in action, we have answers. Well, some.

Most important is the control system. Unlike EA's *Fight Night*, *Prizefighter* has stuck to a traditional method rather than create their own version of the Total Punch Control system. That, according to the developers, "slowed the game down" and detracted from the ferocity of the action.

Next up is the lauded 'documentary style'. Essentially, live action interviews (with actual boxers, trainers and, of course, Don King) are interspersed with gameplay as it follows an unashamedly cliched rags-to-riches storyline with your created boxer as the lead. It also includes nifty black-and-white flashback fights, as well as the chance to balance your media profile with your training regime.

It all sounds like an interesting way to flesh out the 'fight, train, fight, train' style of recent boxing titles. We'll give you our judgement once we get to experience it more first-hand. **Shaun** GM

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ The prospect of Wii balance board training minigames
+ The documentary bits

GM HATES

- That the punches don't feel very high impact
- That we can't get our hair to stand like Don's

MOST WANTED RATING

There are some interesting concepts that we've currently only been given a taste of. How it all fits together is something we'll find out with some proper hands-on time.

4

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .....Fight Night Round 3, 90%
BIGGEST RIVAL: Facebreaker
OUT SOONER: Wii Sports, 80%

OUT: MAY • FORMAT: Wii • PRICE: TBC • DEVELOPER: UBISOFT • PUBLISHER: UBISOFT • PLAYERS: 1-2

EMERGENCY HEROES

Time to do some good for a change!

OLD FLAME

Getting to the scene of the emergency is only part of the job – now you have to deal with the situation! Need help? Get a pal.

All the missions are timed so once you getting going, there's no stopping.

The co-op mode is split-screen. Tackle the problem from different sides.

Drive at speed to access the Hero mode to make you invulnerable.

This is one positive game. There's no murder, robbing or disrespecting other people; there's some reckless driving but that's absolutely fine as speed is of the essence when you're the driver of an emergency service vehicle, as you are in *Emergency Heroes*.

Set in the near future city of San Alto you assume the role of Zach Harper, a cadet with a flair for driving who must speed around the streets to various man-made and natural disasters that have befallen the city.

Each of the rescue vehicles is high-tech. You don't swing a cumbersome firetruck around the streets here – this is a fast-paced action driving game that blends free-roaming with quick-fire missions.

It's deliberately targeted at 'young rescuers' but that shouldn't mean the action is dumbed down – the developers made *Stuntman* and *Driver* too.

We await to see how the Wii-mote is used, not just for the handling but also for dealing with the fires, crimes and accidents that you'll have to attend to. With its futuristic presentation, it looks a bit like *Crackdown*. But we'll have to see if it's got the same freedom and fun. **Dave** GM

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?

Free-roaming driving game; control a rescue team, fire truck or police van.

FACTS

- Two-player co-operative play
- 16 different vehicles to drive
- All set in San Alto – a futuristic city

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...

Driver 3 ..... 75%
Stuntman 82%

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ Positive games
+ That it looks great
+ The sound developers

GM HATES

- That it might be made 'easy' to appeal to younger gamers

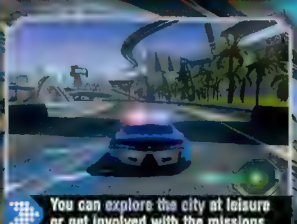
MOST WANTED RATING

If it can capture the same spirit and madness of *Crazy Taxi* but add greater variety to the missions then it could be a hit. We hope it's not too kiddy, though.

3

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .Crazy Taxi, 81%
BIGGEST RIVAL: ..Emergency Mayhem
OUT SOONER: GTA IV, see p6



You can explore the city at leisure or get involved with the missions.

This is for those who love the Vigilante missions in *Grand Theft Auto* – good, honest crime fighting. Do some good then sleep easy...

Wii

SQUARE ENIX

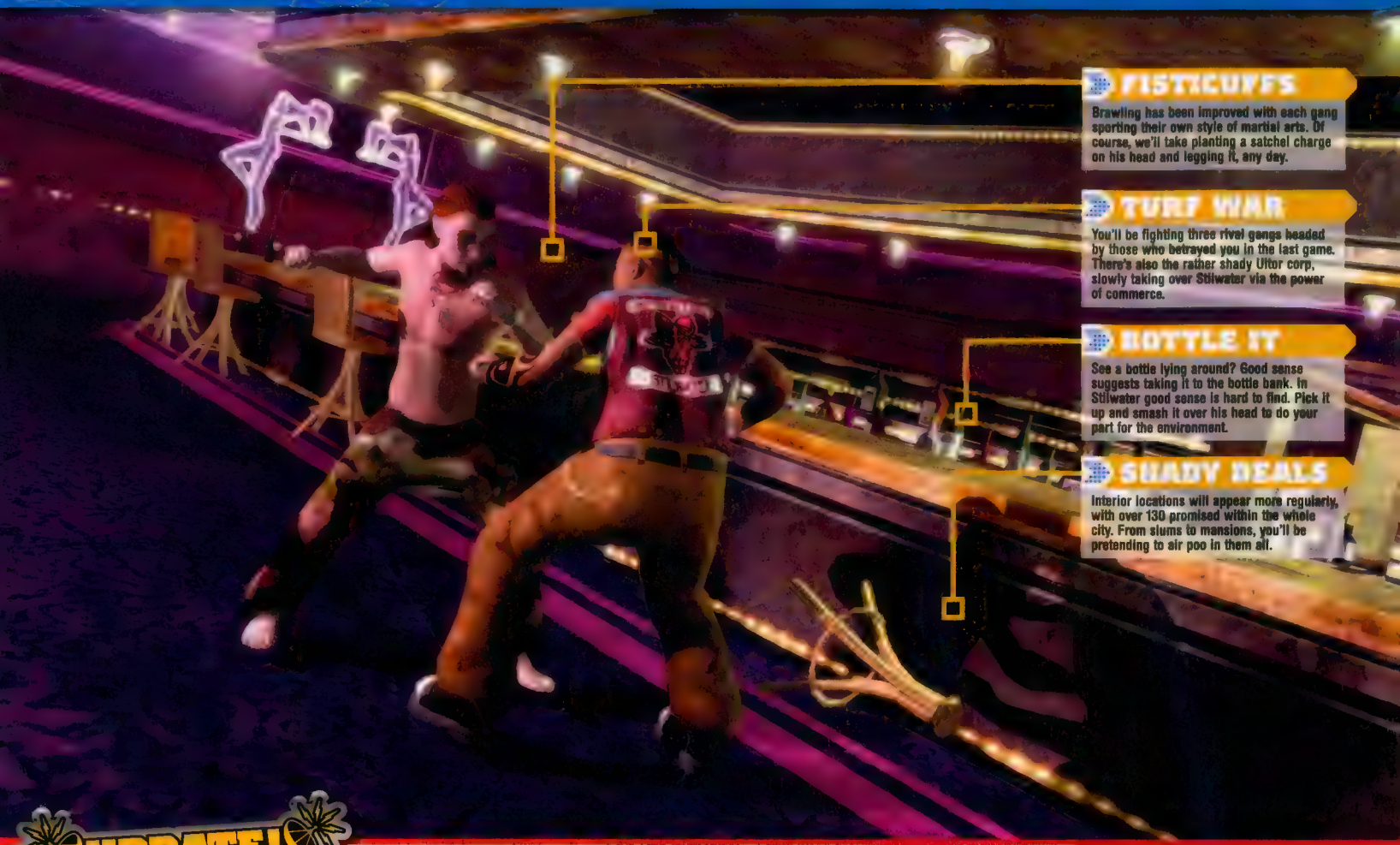
You are the hero.
The Wii Remote™ is your legendary sword!

DRAGON QUEST SWORDS

DRAGON QUEST SWORDS
The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors

12+
www.pegi.info

www.dragonquestswords.co.uk



FISTICUFFS
Brawling has been improved with each gang sporting their own style of martial arts. Of course, we'll take planting a satchel charge on his head and legging it, any day.

TURF WAR
You'll be fighting three rival gangs headed by those who betrayed you in the last game. There's also the rather shady Ultor corp, slowly taking over Stilwater via the power of commerce.

BOTTLE IT
See a bottle lying around? Good sense suggests taking it to the bottle bank. In Stilwater good sense is hard to find. Pick it up and smash it over his head to do your part for the environment.

SHADY DEALS
Interior locations will appear more regularly, with over 130 promised within the whole city. From slums to mansions, you'll be pretending to air poo in them all.

UPDATE! WE GET OUR HANDS ON THE FIRST PLAYABLE VERSION OF THQ'S CRIME SIM

PSP, PS2 • OUT: AUGUST • DEVELOPER: VOLITION • PUBLISHER: THQ • ONLINE: CO-OP • WEB: WWW.SAINTSROW.COM • PLAYERS: 1-2 CO-OP

Saints Row 2

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?

GTA clone that sees you return to the city that stabbed you in the back.

FACTS

- Customisable body and home for a full fat gangster experience
- Boats, motorbikes, planes and helicopters join the fun
- Use human shields and makeshift weapons: bottles and spades, anyone?

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...

Saints Row 60%
Red Faction 90%

A fully licensed soundtrack is promised; expect to tune in for some soul classics as you're cruising around the streets of Stilwater.

Things *Saint* what they used to be...

So, what did good old *Team GM* get up to on their recent trip to San Francisco? Well, we blew up a trailer park. We also attached a bomb to a granny's head. Then we rained lead down from an attack chopper. And we pretended to empty our bowels onto a gang-banger's still warm body. We even managed to find some time to play *Saints Row 2* (ba-doom cha!).

We're joking of course, the above 'talents' are just some of the fun we had in our return to Stilwater – Volition's answer to Liberty City. Not that they're worried about *GTA* at all, because they're pimping a different brand of chaos. Satchel charges attached to cars form rolling bombs. Explosions send enemies, cars and nearby fences raining from the sky. And an AI with a sense of humour sends pedestrians vaulting over seven foot fences in vain attempts to flee your wave of destruction.

GANG-STAR?

Far from the furrowed brow of *GTA* grump Niko Bellic, you can construct your own persona here. Although you continue as the first game's character, a handy bomb to the face allows for a plastic surgery twist to be used. Once you've chiselled some good looks from your

"YOU EVEN PICK YOUR WALK – FROM CRAZY SHUFFLE TO PIMP STRUT"

HANDS ON

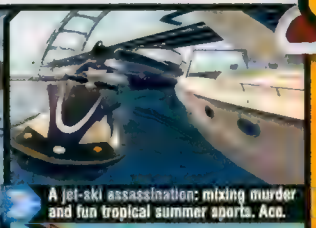
PREVIEWER: Matthew

HOW FINISHED? 30%

THE WHEEL DEAL

Carjacking? Pfft! Who needs to steal four wheels when you can have wings, or a hull. Not all these can be stolen – there are special helicopter side missions, for example – but using them for creative drive/sail/fly-bys should still be fun.

In co-op, one player pilots and the other fires. We call dibs on rockets!



A jet-ski assassination: mixing murder and fun tropical summer sports. Ace.

We can't imagine 50 Cent in a crop duster, but hey, all tastes catered for.

Ahh, trusty on foot. Lay down some satchel charges to slow the traffic.

CONTROLS

R-trigger - shoot
R-bumper - change weapon
R-stick click - Precision aim
A - Action
B - Melee
X - Run
Y - Reload

WE PLAYED IT AT...

THQ's gamer day in San Francisco.

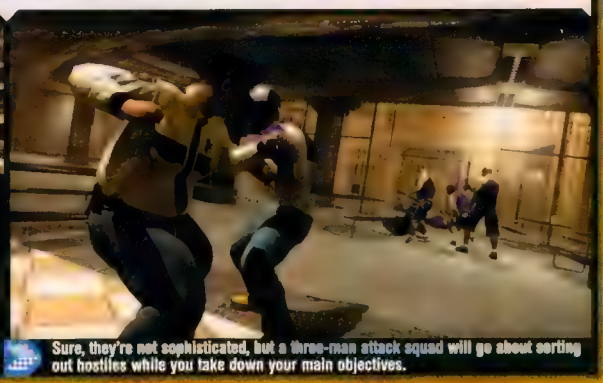
WHAT WE PLAYED

- ✔ Freeplay
- ✔ Story mission
- ✔ Co-op
- ✔ Heli for Hire

THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

Aaah, buddies. They're there for you when you're feeling low, when you're hanging in your crib or when you're pulling off an all-out assault on a drugs laboratory. Three gang members can accompany you on missions. Here's hoping they're more trustworthy than your first gang...

Going it alone lets you feel the big man, but it lets you feel the big pain, too. Up against 30 plus villains? Time for the cavalry.



Sure, they're not sophisticated, but a three-man attack squad will go about sorting out hostiles while you take down your main objectives.

flambéed noggin you pick your clothes and even your walk – from crazy shuffle to pimp strut – and taunt.

These range from The Dumper – emptying your bowels, mentioned earlier – to more colourful concoctions that are too rude to print. That you're encouraged to pause mid fire-fight to play-act some humiliating scene is a sign of *Saints Row 2*'s silliness. That you can kit out your 'crib' (that means 'house' all you Britishers not down with the kids) with a stripper pole continues the tongue-in-cheek approach.

SAINTS GROW

Not that it doesn't take itself seriously on a technical level. A new over-the-shoulder shooting stance – how very *Gears of Resident War Evil 4* – vastly improves the mayhem, though it didn't hurt that our demo version of the game had infinite ammo and all of the weapons unlocked. You wouldn't want to be an evil-doer in *that* demo, we can tell you.

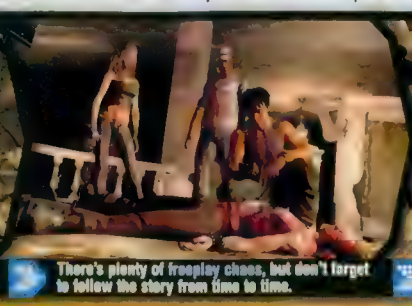
Most exciting of all is the drop-in, drop-out online co-op play. Where *GTA 4* has heaps of great online options, it doesn't let you play the entirety of the story mode with a pal. Not only will you have someone to guffaw at your taunts, but it opens up strategic elements as one player holds back to mop up those left alive by the other player's rocket rampage.

Sure, at this stage things are graphically rough around the edges and some may be put off by the amount of gangland nonsense, but for bare-faced silliness Stillwater remains the top destination. GM

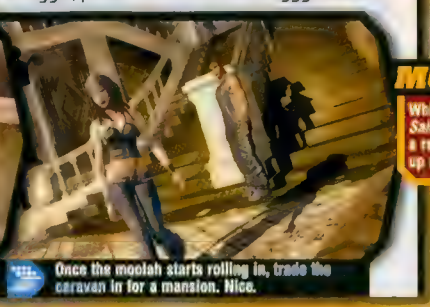
RAGS TO RICHES

Pulled out of the ocean at the end of *Saints Row 1* you're in no condition to reclaim the streets. Jump ahead 15 years and Stilwater has changed – neatly explaining the new layout and districts. Your rise to power will be an uphill struggle, paved with blood and baggy trousers...

Opening in a trailer park you've got to get down and dirty to get a foothold.



There's plenty of freeplay chaos, but don't forget to follow the story from time to time.



Once the moolah starts rolling in, trade the caravan in for a mansion. Nice.

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

It's much like the first game to begin with. The over-the-shoulder aiming is a wise addition – picking off gang members at a distance is much more enjoyable. Elsewhere it's more of a tweak than a reinvention. Placing satchel charges allows for some great strategic set-ups, though the helpfulness of the human shield ability is a tad undermined by an AI that doesn't really know what to do, so just stops fighting and gawps at you though this will probably be fixed.

ANY PROBLEMS?

Some of the fence-exploding physics are a little hair-raising and *GTA* properly trumps it in the visuals department. A little too empty perhaps?

BEST BIT SO FAR

It's cheap and nasty, but attaching a satchel charge to a pedestrian and watching them desperately try and shake it off is a malicious highlight. We feel so dirty afterwards though... bwa ha ha ha...

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ Taking an air dump on someone
+ Messing around with satchel charges

GM HATES

- Bland visuals – there's plenty of time for a polish, mind

MOST WANTED RATING

While *GTA* will rule as the sandbox king, *Saints Row* has plenty of its own ideas and a real eye for destruction. Plus, tighten it up and the co-op could really shine.

4

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: ..GTA 4, see p62
BIGGEST RIVAL: .....GTA 4
OUT SOONER:.....GTA 4, 98%

PC | 2009 | WWW.THESIMS3.COM | EA REDWOOD SHORES | EA | YES - CONTENT SHARING | 1

The Sims 3

The Sims step up another level!

Has it really been over three years since *The Sims 2* launched on PC? So much has happened since then... Robin and Dave were married, Kath tragically passed away in a puddle of her own wee to become a ghost and Ian progressed in his career as a bank robber to become a smuggler. Clearly we're talking about characters in the game here – Editor Robin wouldn't have accepted such a marriage proposal in real life! But with so much *Sims* history already created – it's been 10 years since *The Sims* first launched after all – what can EA possibly have left in store for *The Sims 3*?

Well, a lot of exciting stuff, as revealed by the publisher. *The Sims 2* might have seemed like it hit a pinnacle of realism when released, letting players create families with children that shared their parents' DNA and explore whole neighbourhoods as their Sims, but *The Sims 3* – which has been in development for the last three years – is set to deliver so much more.

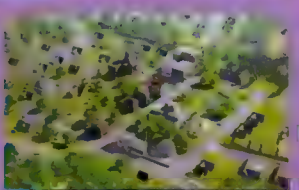
While the previous games presented more of an illusion of a neighbourhood using individual lots that loaded up when you visited, *The Sims 3*'s seamless world will be one that's constantly happening around you. In every household Sims are born, grow older, change careers and even die and you can watch it all – scrolling around the map to watch them even while they're working. It's really set to be a voyeur's dream.

And – in fitting with the game's more grand design that sees you shaping whole communities – you'll no longer be responsible for your Sims' more basic needs, such as visiting the toilet and taking out the bins. Instead of 'mood bars' new 'moodlets' are introduced which mean events in a Sim's life affect their mood for a much longer period of time. So a payrise could make them cheerful for a whole evening, while having to pee on the floor at a party because the toilet's in use could see them withdraw from society for days.

EA is hoping the new wider gameplay approach will appeal to both gamers and casual players alike. Whether it does or not, expect *The Sims 3* to make a massive impact when it's released next year.

Kath

"IN EVERY HOUSEHOLD SIMS ARE BORN, GROW OLDER, CHANGE CAREERS AND EVEN DIE"



This overhead screen is similar to previous *Sims* games.

Looks like an Ikea – you'll have great freedom over the decor.

It's had a graphical overhaul and it'll run on lower end PCs too.

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS IT?

The latest *Sims* life-simulating game featuring seamless neighbourhoods.

FACTS

- Create over 700 million combinations of Sims
- Customise small details right down to the fabric on a sofa
- Mood bars are replaced by more realistic 'moodlets'

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO MADE...

The Sims 2: Castaway 89%
The Urbz: Sims in the City..... 77%

DOWN TOWN

Every Sim will have a backstory, grow old and have a job and family.

This game concerns you with the evolution of the whole neighbourhood.

The streaming map means you can zoom in and watch any Sim.

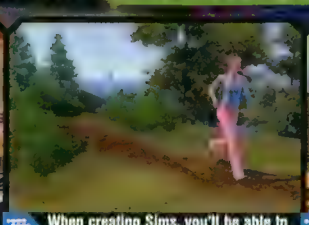
As in previous games, you can increase the skills of your Sims.

Putting out the bins to stop invasions of flies is no longer one of your tasks. Your Sims will look after themselves while you concentrate on higher level objectives.

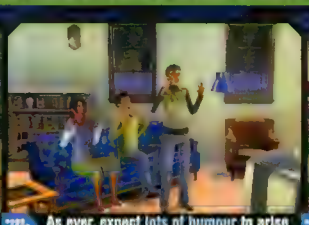
There are more features in the creation of Sims than ever!

SIM CREATION

Improve your Sims to help them in their social lives and careers.



When creating Sims, you'll be able to change their bodies as well as faces.



As ever, expect lots of humour to arise from day-to-day Sims situations.

As always, creating and maintaining relationships will play a big part.

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ The new Sims creation tools
+ No more cleaning the toilet

GM HATES

- The lack of online options to visit other players' neighbourhoods

MOST WANTED RATING 5

EA always seem to manage to deliver what *Sims* fans want, and this time it looks set to do that and appeal to a whole new group of gamers too.

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: The Sims 2, 91%
BIGGEST RIVAL: ..... Spore
OUT SOONER:..... Spore
.....(September 2008)

SAMBA DE AMIGO

Wii • FROM: SEGA • OUT: TBC

The tag 'classic' is banded about too freely for our liking, but there's no disputing *Samba de Amigo*'s status. This rhythm-action game was released for the Dreamcast in 1999, with its maraca peripherals testing your ability to keep up with a Latin beat. This Wii version uses the Wii-mote and nunchuck but the old magic should remain.

Shame there's no maracas but just be thankful it's back and Ulala's smiling again.

MOST WANTED RATING 5

The success of *Samba de Amigo* was restricted by its limited UK release, as everyone lucky enough to play it loved it. Hopefully this will be similar.

YAKUZA 2

PS3 • FROM: SEGA • OUT: TBC

Out in Japan late 2006 it's taken nearly a year and a half for Sega to confirm that *Yakuza 2* will get a UK release. Their uncertainty was probably brought on by the poor sales of the original despite it being a superb game. This sequel continues the story of badass Kazuma Kiryu who must prevent war breaking out between two crime organisations.

The plot has Kazuma being pulled back into the Japanese underworld just when he thought he was out.

MOST WANTED RATING 4

The first game offered great entertainment in a rough and ready way, so it's great news the sequel is being released. This could be one worth watching.

KUNG FU PANDA

PS2 PS3 360 Wii DS PC • FROM: ACTIVISION • OUT: MAY

Created to accompany the summer release of the latest animated feature from *Shrek* creators Dreamworks, *Kung Fu Panda* is an action adventure starring the bamboo-chewing Po who's charged with saving the world from the evil Tai Lung, despite being the laziest kung fu critter around. The game has 13 levels with co-operative and competitive multiplayer options.

As well as Po you can play as Shifu, Monkey, Tigress, Viper, Crane and Mantis – each has a kung fu style.

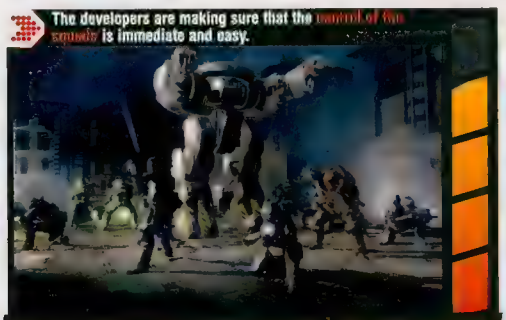
MOST WANTED RATING 3

The film looks ridiculously funny, however, the quality of cartoon spin-offs is so inconsistent that we don't know whether to offer this an embracing arm or explosive fist.

TIBERIUM

PS3 360 PC • FROM: EA • OUT: AUTUMN

Set in the real-time strategy world of *Command & Conquer*, this is a *Battlefield*-style first-person shooter being created by EA's Los Angeles studios responsible for the *Medal of Honor* series. It's an obvious evolution for the *C&C* series but a particularly exciting one as it remains true to its strong strategy roots with gamers able to control squads of non-player characters even in the multiplayer mode.



The developers are making sure that the control of the squads is immediate and easy.

MOST WANTED RATING 4

If EA gets this right this should be a groundbreaking mix of strategy and blasting. What we don't want is an unnecessary spin-off.

WACKY RACES: CRASH & DASH

DS • FROM: BIDOS • OUT: JUNE

This isn't the first game to be inspired by the popular cartoon series but it's the first to attempt something different than a standard mini-kart racer. Using a 2.5D-look the challenge is to control your chosen vehicle then target rivals with the Wii-mote or the DS stylus. Sounds like the driving equivalent of patting your head while rubbing your tummy...

Choose to race as Peter Perfect, the Ant Hill Mob, Penelope Pitstop or the stars Dick Dastardly and Muttley.

MOST WANTED RATING 2

Great cartoons, interesting presentation but we doubt it's going to stop people from playing *Mario Kart*. Maybe we'll be proven wrong when we review it.

SKY CRAWLERS

Wii • FROM: NAMCO BANDAI • OUT: AUGUST

Based on a Japanese novel and upcoming animated film, *Sky Crawlers* is a flight action game from the masters of the genre: the guys behind the *Ace Combat* series. They intend to make full use of the Wii's control system: you'll use the nunchuck to control the direction while the Wii-mote is used as the throttle. The game revolves around the exploits of a group of young pilots fighting in a war set in an alternate history.

The aircraft look like [illegible], a little bit like in the Xbox game *Crimson Skies*.

MOST WANTED RATING 5

We're eager to see how the *Ace Combat*-style gameplay translates to Wii and, if it's successful, whether Wii owners will want a flight sim.

ANGEL LOVE ONLINE

PS3 • FROM: O ENTERTAINMENT • OUT: SUMMER

You take the role of the protector of the angels in this console port of a popular Taiwanese Massively Multiplayer Online RPG. Set in one of four kingdoms in Eden you get to partake in minigames, get pets and of course enhance your characters. The initial download is free but it seems you might have to pay for various items. There's always a catch.

In *Angel Love* it looks like you're never short of friends, just short of space to walk around in.

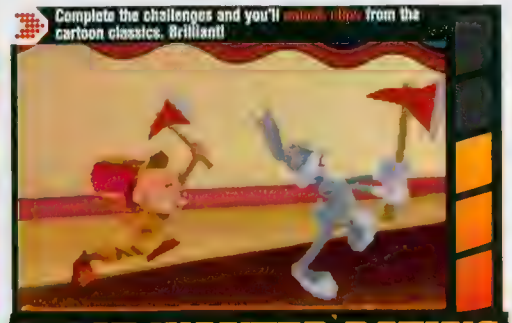
MOST WANTED RATING 4

With its hot hard drive and online capabilities, the PS3 is prime for a MMORPG. Whether *Angel Love* will be the game to exploit the potential will have to be seen.

LOONEY TUNES: CARTOON CONCERTO

DS • FROM: BIDOS • OUT: JUNE

This is a game designed to celebrate an essential element of those classic Warner Bros cartoons: the music. Using the stylus like a conductor's baton you must keep rhythm and direct the melody for the music to flow and the cartoon action to continue.



Complete the challenges and you'll unlock clips from the cartoon classics. Brilliant!

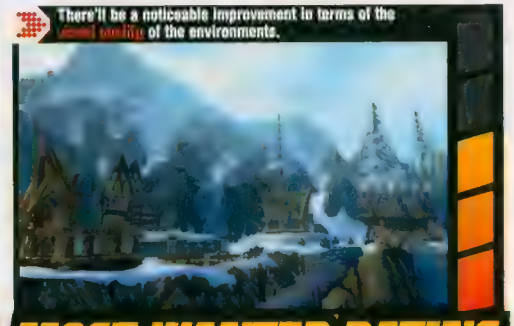
MOST WANTED RATING 3

This is basically a licensed version of *Elite Beat Agents*, but the combined charms of Bugs, Daffy and Elmer should win over the cynics.

WORLD OF WARCRAFT: WRATH OF THE LICH KING

PC • FROM: ACTIVISION BLIZZARD • OUT: TBC

This expansion pack for the hugely successful online multiplayer RPG *World of Warcraft* is set in the land of Northrend. It raises the level cap to 80, introduces the Death Knight hero class and has hundreds of new items, dungeon creatures and spells.



There'll be a noticeable improvement in terms of the visual quality of the environments.

MOST WANTED RATING 3

The introduction of Hero Classes is the big news in an expansion pack designed to keep the converted content rather than bring new gamers to the series.

WHERE THE HELL IS...?

BORDERLANDS

WHAT IS IT?
Sci-fi first-person shooter with major RPG elements set on a recently colonised planet that has descended into anarchy as there's little there to sustain the new life.

LAST SEEN?
At the Leipzig Games Convention 2007 where we saw the game's incredible weapon-building system demoed that really captured our imagination.

WHY IS IT TAKING SO LONG?
Well, to be fair, the developers Gearbox have a lot on making this, *Aliens: Colonial Marines*, *Samba De Amigo* and the new *Brothers in Arms*. We want this to be awesome so hopefully it'll be worth the wait.

SO BLONDE

PUBLISHER: 2K GAMES • DATE: JUNE

Think of *So Blonde* as 'Paris Hilton gets stranded on *Monkey Island*'. Yes, it's a point-and-click adventure, with a storyline written by Steve '*Broken Sword*' Ince. As 17-year-old socialite Sunny Blonde, who has not only been abandoned on a Bermudan island but thrown back in time, you'll have to negotiate a series of bizarre situations, puzzles and tongue-in-cheek minigames.

The normal gameplay is traditional point-and-click but puzzles are often resolved with kooky minigames...

MOST WANTED RATING 3

We need to see more of the comedy to see if it lives up to its promise of a wacky story and 'deeply black humour' but it could do well if it finds the right audience.

BAJA

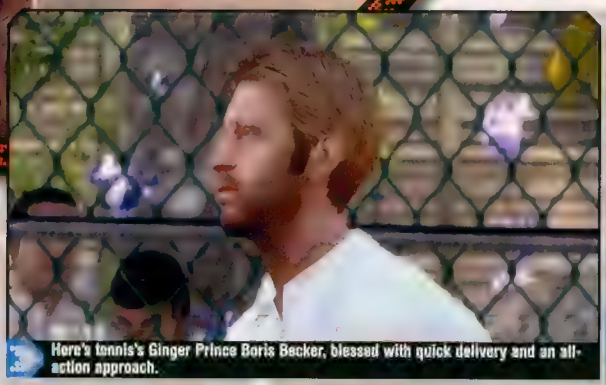
PUBLISHER: THQ • DATE: AUGUST

With years of experience from the *MX vs ATV* series, 2XL Games have turned their attention to a new off-road title – *Baja* (pronounced Ba-Ha, in case you didn't know). It promises 100 square miles of landscape to explore, hill-climbing, circuit and rally events and a 'balance of real-world sport with arcade fun' in 4x4s, jeeps and buggies.

THQ know their off-road games and, hopefully, know the standard of the competition. We expect big things!

MOST WANTED RATING 3

With *MotorStorm 2* out of a similar time and the off-road market well covered, THQ need a few tricks up their sleeve to make this stand out from the competition.



Here's tennis's Ginger Prince Boris Becker, blessed with quick delivery and an all-action approach.

PS3 XBOX 360 DS • DATE: MAY • PUBLISHER: 2K SPORTS • DEVELOPER: PAM DEVELOPMENT • PLAYERS: 1-4

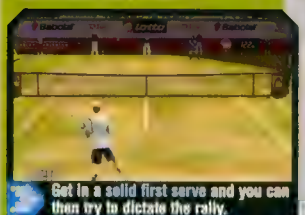
TOP SPIN 3

Serving up the odd legend or two...

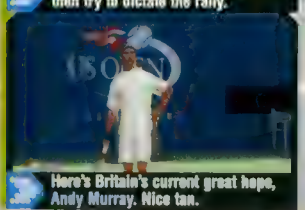
IS IT ACE?

It's great to see developers reacting to feedback from gamers, and that's just what's happened with *Top Spin 3*. Criticised for having a poor roster of players, the series has come back strong by not only including the top stars of today, but a handful of tennis legends. So as well as Federer and Roddick, you'll have Becker, Borg and Monica Seles. And what's rare for tennis games, they all look really good as *Top Spin* so far looks like an extremely slick and visually stunning game.

There's also more natural looking animation for player movement that helps you get in position for returns easier and allows you to time the shots better. You can make your mark in competitive online contests too. **Dave**



Get in a solid first serve and you can then try to dictate the rally.



Here's Britain's current great hope, Andy Murray. Nice tan.

MOST WANTED RATING 4

Top Spin offers a less immediate style of tennis than *Virtua Tennis*, but it can deliver greater depth than the Sega game we'll be keen to play it. "New balls please..."

PS3 XBOX 360 PC DS • DATE: WINTER • PUBLISHER: EA • DEVELOPER: EA LOS ANGELES • PLAYERS: 1-TBC

COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT 3

Another hit from the C&C RTS factory?

BACK-UP

Cooperative play seems almost essential for any game these days so we shouldn't be surprised to see it an RTS. But how will it work in *Red Alert 3* where it's a genre first? The idea is to have each commander doing separate tasks to help complete the same objective.

It seems EA have been watching *The Golden Compass* as *Red Alert* now has armoured bears in it. Representing the ultimate in cuddly destruction these tooled-up bears are just one of the brand new weapons available to the three warring factions in this point-and-click real-time strategy game. Other new weapons include transforming tanks, teleporters and dolphins.

There are now three factions in the *Red Alert* universe, after the leader of the Soviet forces, (who are losing the third world war) travelled back in time to try and gain some advantage only to create an alternate future where an Eastern superpower has joined the struggle.

Red Alert was a spin off from the *Command & Conquer* series and became popular due to its easy-to-play, action-orientated style. It's been seven years since the last game so it's great to see it back and getting a release on the consoles.

Whether it will generate enough interest to bring new gamers into the world of RTS will have to be seen as so far presentation wise it does look like it's come from another age of gaming. **Dave** GM

The idea is to make missions work with two commanders.

It's not about two gamers pushing units about, this is proper co-op play.

The devs hope to encourage casual gamers to get involved with RTSs.

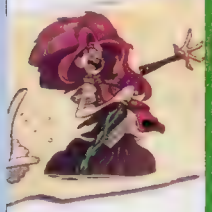
Red Alert was always more light-hearted and fun than *C&C* and EA hope this style will be friendly to RTS newcomers.

MOST WANTED RATING 3

As EA evolve the *C&C* series with the forthcoming shooter *Tiberium* and later this year, it's good to see that they're still catering for those who like strategy from a top-down perspective as well.

DOODLE HEX

DS
OUT: JUNE
PUBLISHER: TBC
DEVELOPER: TRAGNARION STUDIOS



WHAT IS IT?

It's like a one-on-one fighting game, except rather than jumping, kicking and punching, you're drawing shapes with your stylus to cast different kinds of spells, which all have offensive and defensive properties. Just drain your opponent's health to emerge victorious!

THE FACTS

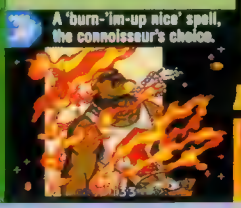
- Choose from multiple characters who excel differently in speed, power and defence
- Learn different spells and customise your character by picking which spells you take into battle
- Use 'pets' to store instant spell casts for better combos!

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

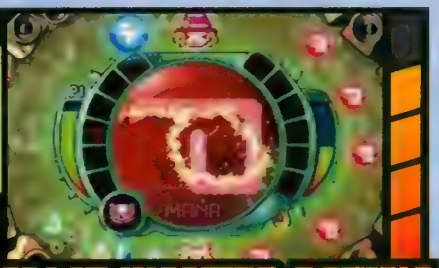
Surprisingly brilliant and refreshingly original too. It's very much like a one-on-one fighter, making you look at the tools at your disposal (in this case spells) and work out the best time to cast and the best combos to create so you can maximise damage. We love the insane art style and lovely presentation too. It makes it all very distinctive.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Nailing the timing of spell-casting to create damaging combos. It's pretty hard so it's all the more satisfying to do.



A 'burn-'im-up nice' spell, the connoisseur's choice.

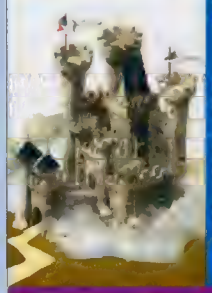


MOST WANTED RATING 4

We love a cheeky little surprise of a game on DS – something that looks bit different yet, crucially, brilliant fun – and this fits that description perfectly. This could be a surprise hit.

SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION REVOLUTION

DS
OUT: JUNE
PUBLISHER: 2K
DEVELOPER: FIRAXIS



WHAT IS IT?

Classic turn-based strategy that spans the ages. From barbarians wielding sticks and stones to nuke-launching space-racing super cultures, develop your civilisation so it dominates all others, culturally, politically or militarily.

THE FACTS

- Settle your people on virgin lands and compete for resources, land, power and influence
- Different strategies for winning – from cultural growth to raw, military or technological power!

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Seems, well, perfect! It's very much in the spirit of the PC's *Civilization*, but much more streamlined and less fussy – which is great for anyone intimidated by the insane level of detail in it's bigger brother. It's also much more sedate, and less stressful than, say *Advance Wars*, with more choice how to progress.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Using your advanced armies to rout your pathetic, Luddite neighbours and taking over their lands. Victory!

"Go forth and prosper, my violent little friends!"

MOST WANTED RATING 5

At long last. We've always thought that the DS is the perfect platform for a more streamlined *Civilization*. Team GM's bedtime gaming will never be the same again!

SIMON THE SORCERER 4: CHAOS HAPPENS

PC
OUT: SPRING 2008
PUBLISHER: PLAYLOGIC
DEVELOPER: RTL ENTERPRISES

WHAT IS IT?

A point and click adventure that resurrects the teenage wizard Simon from PC days gone by. Laced with fairytale parody, Simon travels to different dimensions in his magic wardrobe, trying to prevent his doppelganger from causing havoc.

THE FACTS

- An official follow up to the point-and-click series from over a decade ago – now in full 3D
- Quirky humour centred on a fairytale universe – including Red Riding Hood!
- New development team to take Simon into the world of 3D

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Well, it's a point-and-click game! The appeal of games like this lies on the strength of its puzzles, and these aren't too bad. It has the right amount of challenge, but can involve an awful lot of backtracking. Terrible voice acting is part of its charm, but the script is no *Monkey Island* beater at the moment.

BEST BIT SO FAR

The satisfaction after solving the puzzles and Simon's own humorous take on the world around him!

Little Red Riding Hood – ASBO style!

MOST WANTED RATING 3

As long as some of the small technical niggles are ironed out, *Simon the Sorcerer 4* will probably develop a cult following. Keep an eye out for our review of this soon.

LEGEND: HAND OF GOD

PC
OUT: JUNE
PUBLISHER: EIDOS
DEVELOPER: MASTER CREATING

WHAT IS IT?

A third-person action RPG built clearly in the mould of successful titles such as *Dungeon Siege* and *Baldur's Gate*. Players take the role of Tarkan, a hero charged with recovering the 'Hand of God', the only artefact that can close the portal to a demon world.

THE FACTS

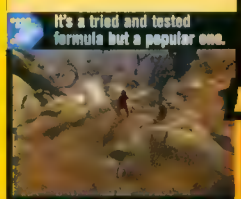
- The sizes of enemies needs to be taken into consideration – larger baddies need to be realistically tackled
- Your companion is a Bright Elf called Luna. Not only does she act as your cursor, she also handily illuminates dark areas

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

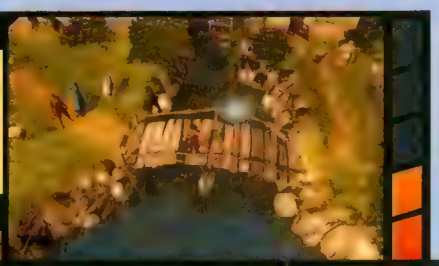
It's like a thousand other RPGs you've seen and played before but that isn't necessarily a bad thing; after all, there's a reason that so many of them exist. Aside from the ability to climb larger monsters in order to attack them, this appears to be by-the-book RPG adventuring – pretty forests, crumbling ruins, fireballs and broadswords all the way...

BEST BIT SO FAR

Finding the wallpaper of foxy German actress Cosma Shiga Haven dressed as the Bright Elf that she voices.



It's a tried and tested formula but a popular one.



MOST WANTED RATING 2

Legend: Hand of God is far from the most innovative RPG we've encountered, but it looks to be as typically entertaining as action RPGs normally are...

DOCTOR WHO: TOP TRUMPS

PS2 DS
OUT: JUNE
PUBLISHER: EIDOS
DEVELOPER: IRONSTONE

WHAT IS IT?

It's *Top Trumps*. With Doctor Who. You know, that game where they have cards with a list of statistics on them and you have to pick one that has a higher number than your opponent. Only you have to pay considerably more than a pack of cards in order to play it on your DS/PS2.

THE FACTS

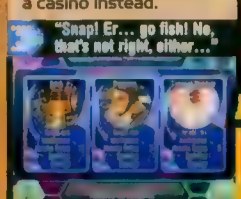
- Can be played in a single-player mode that will allow you to unlock special cards and hidden content within the game
- Uses the style of the *Doctor Who* cartoon rather than the TV programme

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

We're not quite sure how to break it to you but... it's like a game of *Top Trumps*. Okay, so your characters have 'special moves' that you can use after a winning streak (such as seeing cards in your opponent's hand) and there's a wealth of trivia for *Doctor Who* fans and game modes that are a variation on the same theme. But it's still just *Top Trumps*.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Hammering who we were playing against. But we wish such a lucky streak with the cards had occurred in a casino instead.



"Snap! Er... go fish! No, that's not right, either..."

MOST WANTED RATING 3

If you're a huge *Doctor Who* fan like Team GM's Rory, the most wanted rating will almost definitely be higher. The Time Lord doesn't make many appearances in videogames, after all.

Preview extraordinaires: Geraint Evans, Shaun Curnow, Rory Smith and John Meadowcroft

WE LOVE GAMES

EMAIL US: gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk, subject heading We Love Games
WRITE TO US: We Love Games, GamesMaster, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.
TEXT US: Send LOVE then your message to 84070. But keep it short!

Mad? Bad? Sad? See how each letter writer is feeling at a glance!

Happy | Mad | Unhappy | Angry | Surprised | Normal

Welcome to GM's letters page! This month you air your views on the pitfalls of parenthood, the joys of old games and the crushing disappointment of delays...

STAR LETTER!

We Love Wii

Hello *GM*,

I would just like to air my opinion about the seventh-gen console war. As we all know Nintendo Wii is selling phenomenally well in the three main gaming sectors in the world (Europe, Japan and the United States) and I think this is due to Nintendo returning to its roots and producing a console for fun, not horsepower. Unlike with the 360 and PS3, Nintendo exploited the gap in the market. Before the Wii came along, videogames were lacking the main element that infatuated the earliest of gamers: simplicity. As far back as the early '90s I remember games being a form of release, a way out of reality. What you were playing on screen was different from what was going on around you. They were worlds with no stress, tension or cares, but now games are becoming so realistic that soon the line between real life and videogames will become very blurred indeed. The Wii welcomes back the era of happiness in videogames, what with *Mario* and *Zelda* and many more Wii titles being fantasies, providing a world outside our own that is free of the worries of the modern world. Because of this approach I think the Wii will win the console war as it retains the foundations that the industry was built on.

Adam Fallon, email

Hi Adam; those are some good points well made. We're in absolute agreement that the magic of the Wii helps transport us back to those heady days when games were 2D, the summers were long and our only worries were whether we could fit in our maths homework after a three hour session on the Sega Mega Drive. But, a word of caution – for every *Super Smash Bros Brawl* or *Bully: Scholarship Edition*, there's a glut of abysmal minigame collections that take us to a very dark place indeed...

Think of the children!

Dear *GM*,

I was walking through my local shopping centre today, and on my way home I stopped to buy a copy of *GM*. I couldn't wait to read it so I opened it and read the *GTA* article (which I must say was very good). I was putting the mag in my bag and hurrying to get the bus when I saw a pre-order poster for *GTA IV*. As I went inside the shop and approached the till, there was a woman in front of me buying *Assassin's Creed* and pre-ordering *GTA* for her son. I thought he looked a bit small, so I asked her how old he was. "He's five," she answered, so I asked her why she was going to buy him an 18-rated game, to which she replied, "get lost". Afterwards I became worried about the kid and the influence that adult-rated games could have on him...

Fujitsu Magill, email

That's a disturbing tale you tell, Fujitsu, and it's all too easy to imagine said mum plonking junior in front of the latest 18-rated game before grabbing some me time with a big crate of alco-pops. The problem is that some older folks still view videogames as toys rather than the highly sophisticated (and in some cases, adult) works of entertainment we know they are. No doubt those parents would find it unthinkable to sit their pride and joy down to watch a back-to-back video nasty marathon with extra T 'n' A, so their attitude to violent games should be no different...

The Star Letter each month will win a game from *GM*'s shiny and bulging Big Sack O' Games!

WIN!

FANSITE OF THE MONTH

ff-fan.com

This month to accompany our *Crisis Core* review we're delving into the obsessive world of *Final Fantasy* fandom. Square Enix's hugely popular series helped popularise RPGs in the west, and inspire the sort of fervent devotion usually reserved for the likes of Elvis Presley, The Dalai Lama and that bloke off the Cillit Bang adverts (okay maybe not that one). To find out why check out this site featuring an extensive guide to the series, fan fiction, and a brilliant quiz that determines which FF character you're most like.

GOT A FANSITE!

Any game-related websites you've either made or couldn't live without? Email, write or text and tell us! Potential free goodies await the best entry...

More Retro

Dear *GM*,

I've gone back through some of your older issues (from over the last two years) and have read plenty of people who would like *GamesMaster* to cover more 'retro' gaming. I think it's about time you guys take that aspect of the industry more serious. I know that many retro games have been reviewed years ago by the *GM* team, however, different controllers are used now and some ports may be a tad different. Some games might not have aged as well as others and one would like to get an idea of what games to purchase. I know you guys have a page by the name of 'We love old games' in the magazine, but it's now 2008 and retro games have evolved. Gosh, I find it very difficult to think that PS1 and N64 games are Retro games, but they are... And further they can be downloaded right now to your new console that's sat under your telly!

I'm lucky enough to own the 360, Wii and PS3 and have downloaded several of the downloadable titles from the respective networks but I would love to read the thoughts of the *GM* team before buying them, especially on new titles such as *Assault Heroes* (Xbox Arcade) or *PixelJunk Monsters* (PSN) that have never been released before. And with WiiWare around the corner we need to know which games to buy as there are brand new titles that have NO history and thus we have NO idea what the game is about or if it is actually worth our hard-earned money.

Space Invaders was released in Japan in 1978 – that's a real shoot-'em-up...

Every week Nintendo launches two new games while Sony and Microsoft launch something weekly and in time there will be so many titles available that we're going to need your help... In fact, I think we need your expertise right now!

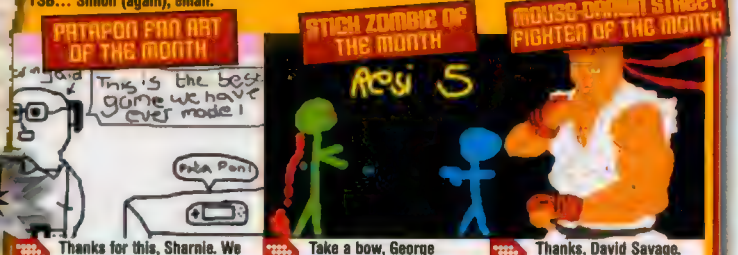
Dawid, email

We're glad you got in touch, Dawid, as every month we agonise over which games to cram into the pages of *GM*. Recently we've been trying to feature more of the new titles appearing on PSN and XBLA, and rest assured when WiiWare goes live we'll be covering that too. In the meantime, as there's no room to feature the wide range of

THE SPAM FILTER

BEST BAD JOKE: Why is everyone telling me my clocks have to go back? There's nothing wrong with them. Simon, email.

SECOND BEST BAD JOKE: I'm undecided on where to go for my bank holiday; Halifax or Lloyds TSB... Simon (again), email.


PATAPON FAN ART OF THE MONTH
This is the best game we have ever made!
STICK ZOMBIE OF THE MONTH
Resi 5
MOUSE-DRAWN STREET FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

Thanks for this, Sharnie. We can't stop humming it either.

Take a bow, George Blaylock-Squibbs.

Thanks, David Savage. Keep 'em coming.

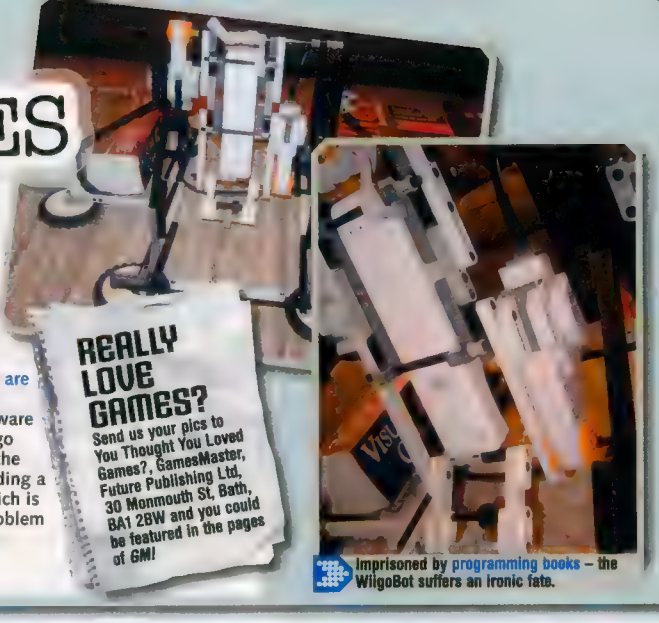
WE REALLY LOVE GAMES

YOU THOUGHT YOU LOVED GAMES?

THESE FOLKS HAVE TAKEN IT ALL TOO FAR!

This month: Will Gorman's excellent (and painstakingly silly) WiigoBot, which bowls a perfect game every time in *Wii Sports*. Strike!

GM: What inspired you to build your WiigoBot?
I'm always looking for a good Lego Robotics challenge, and one of the guys brought his Wii to work. I realised at that time that a machine could be built to control the Wii-mote.
GM: How long did it take to make?
I bought a Wii on a Tuesday night, and then a video was filmed of it on the Thursday night. I spent one night building the machine, and another night programming the Lego Mindstorms NXT. I was actually surprised it worked the first time I filmed it!
GM: Would it be possible, do you reckon, to build robots capable of playing other Wii games?
As long as the required game movements are repetitive and require minimal feedback, it would be very easy. If the game requires any visual feedback, that's when it becomes a much greater challenge.
GM: How good are *you* at *Wii Bowling*, anyway?
I bowl in the low 200s. I'll never be as good as WiigoBot! I still haven't bowled a perfect game, but now I know it's my fault, not the Wii's.
GM: And lastly: what else are you up to at the moment?
I work for Pentaho, a software company and we have Lego Robotics competitions at the office. Right now I'm building a maze following robot, which is actually a much harder problem than a Wii bowling robot!
GM: Best of luck, Will!



REALLY LOVE GAMES?
Send us your pics to You Thought You Loved Games?, GamesMaster, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW and you could be featured in the pages of GM!

Imprisoned by programming books – the WiigoBot suffers an ironic fate.

retro titles and older downloads available we'll do a quick round-up right here. Our Virtual Console highlights are old N64 blaster *Lylat Wars*, Super Nintendo god-game-come-platformer *Actraiser* and hard-as-nails Mega Drive rarity *Alien Soldier*. On Xbox Live you can't go far wrong with retro shooters *Rez HD*, *Space Giraffe* and arcade classic *Smash TV*. PSN-wise our current favourites are Dark Mist (it scored 85% last issue) and the aforementioned *PixelJunk Monsters*, both of which are some of the best games available for the PS3, and fine examples of how good fresh downloadable content can be.

Hiddie Console?

Dear *GM*,

I'm writing to express my feelings about the age range of games on the Wii. I think that in these past two years there have been around four or five mature games.

I'm 15 and love first-person shooting and action games. I thought *Red Steel* and *Splinter Cell* were good. But as I was looking on the internet I saw that the majority of Wii games are for children aged three. I mean, don't get me wrong – I think that the Mario games are great but I don't really want to play games that were designed for small children and are so easy that it isn't worth spending £30+ for.

I know that small children need games as well, but don't you think Nintendo are overdoing it a bit? I love the *Halo* and *Call of Duty* series on the Xbox but I don't see anything like these on the Wii. I know that Nintendo aren't associated with Bungee but they should try and make something like these series for older audiences.

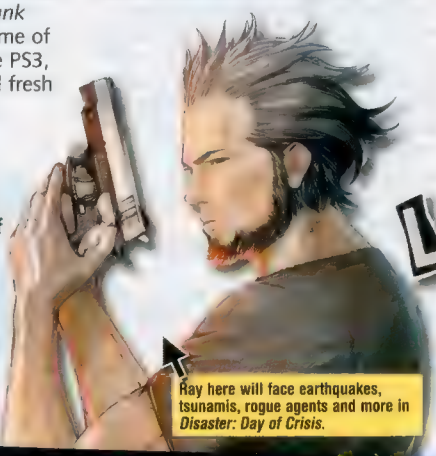
Darryl Cassidy, Newton

We know what you mean, Darryl. The trouble is that the Wii isn't powerful enough to handle games such as *Call of Duty* or *Halo* and would require either scaled-down ports or exclusive versions of those series. Having said that, the developers have developed mature games for Nintendo in the past; just look at *Perfect Dark* (on the N64), *Eternal Darkness* (on the GameCube) and Resident Evil 4 (GameCube and Wii). In the meantime you might like to give games such as *Metroid* and *Mario Galaxy* a go; they may look less grown up, but they're every bit as advanced as anything the Xbox 360 or PS3 has to offer. Oh, and keep a look out for *Monolith's Disaster: Day of Crisis*, a mature Wii game featuring a series of natural disasters and a stolen nuclear warhead.

Delay Dismay

Dear *GamesMaster*,

Can I just say how fed up I am with games getting delayed. Games such as



Ray here will face earthquakes, tsunamis, rogue agents and more in *Disaster: Day of Crisis*.

YouTube VIDEO OF THE MONTH

TYPE IN "REJECTED WII PLAY GAMES" ON YOUTUBE

Wii Play is a fleetingly entertaining tutorial in how best to wield your Wii-mote, but just think what it could have been, or better yet watch. This tongue-in-cheek video features some inventive and hilarious suggestions should a sequel ever be made, including the disturbing prostate examination and caesarean section surgery complete with Miis.

LIST OF DEMANDS

HALO

What *you* want in the next *Halo*!

- Being able to play as Brutes, Grunts or Flood in multiplayer and being able to customise your character further
- Bigger and badder turrets that are non-detachable, eg Spartan laser turrets that don't have to charge up
- A very long campaign with an ending involving a huge number of wraiths and scarabs, and Master Chief running around with a quad-barrelled Spartan laser!
- More/bigger multiplayer maps, larger than Sand Trap! And more Multiplayer modes such as Cat and Mouse (rockets with a Chopper and a Mongoose with three players)
- Weapon upgrades such as faster reload times, increased clips or longer ranges
- Bigger vehicles, eg, a Brute Tank (imagine a Scorpion with Chopper guns and a Prowler's turret) and drivable Pelicans and Scarabs
- More/beefier weapons, eg, a Brute Ripper (an on-foot version of the Chopper gun)
- More/improved equipment, eg, auto turrets with dual SMGs, which can be swapped with your weapons, eg auto turrets with rocket launchers and fuel rod guns. Also, Flash and Stun grenades
- Being able to melee/drive vehicles with dual weapons. And dual energy swords... (Drool.)

From Luke Hardy, no address supplied

MAKE YOUR LIST OF DEMANDS!
Reckon you know a thing or two about making great games? Think you could show developers how it's done? Well, here's your chance to tell the world how you'd improve your favourite game series. Write or email us your list of demands. Free office goodies for the best ones.

WE LOVE GAMES

Go on, get it off your chest, readers. Let us know what's got your goat.

MYSPACE MOUTH OFF!

A selection of the sane and not-so-sane comments from GM's home on the web...

Sonic Unleashed is confirmed. I think the 2D/3D thing looks really good.
Leighton

What's your favourite weapon in *Unreal*? The grav hammer sucks harder than 5th Dyson.
Richy Davis

One of my colleagues drilled through his thumb bone by accident today.
Jonny

OK, every one – I have Haribo.
Simon

What a big letdown *Dynasty Warriors 6* turned out to be, hope they make the next one better.
Ruki Matsuda

That's got to hurt!
Ali Cat

I always feel lost when you all talk about cars...
Mav

Mav, don't worry. I feel lost with most of what you lot talk about.
Emma

Been playing *Sega Superstar Tennis*, good game but I finished it in five hours.
Danny B

GTA IV 16 players online!
Rob

I think we should have a tourny vs GM on TF2.
Bilbah (Dave) D:

If you're not MySpace inclined, come and join GM on our new Bebo site! Surf to: http://gamesmastermag.bebo.com

WWW.myspace.com/gamesmastermag

WE WANT YOUR JOB!

Pestering the jammiest jobsmiths in the business!

We talk to Game Director Jason Avent from Black Rock Studio just before they release offroad racer *Pure*.

Who are you, what's your job and what are you currently working on?
My name is Jason Avent and I'm working on Black Rock Studio's first game after being bought by Disney. It's a totally original arcade offroad trick racing game called *Pure*.

How did you get into the games industry?
I did a degree in Civil Engineering. As it turned out, I gave up on that and got into games through a friend instead. I started off at Microprose as a Level Designer well over a decade ago and then worked my way up over the years.

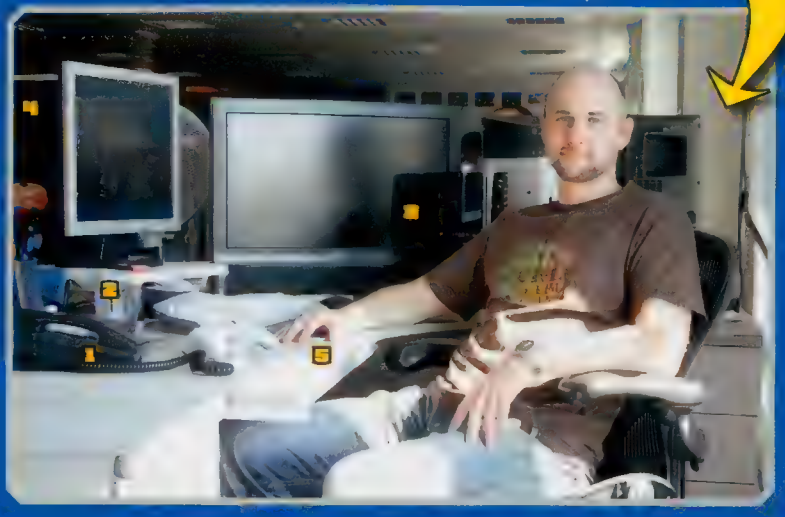
What does your typical day involve?
No two days are ever the same. I lead a team of more than 60 talented individuals. They all have different disciplines – code, art, design and production management. There are always different issues to solve. Most of my job is about ensuring we're all pushing on in the same direction and making sure that direction leads to a game that's fun, competitive and actually achievable in the development time. My work involves lots of meetings to discuss designs and how things should be done. I also need to make sure we have the support of the sales and marketing parts of Disney so they know what we're making and how to sell it. At the end of the project, I have to travel around the world to launch the game to the press, distributors and retailers which is pretty fun but very tiring.

Any advice on how to get into games?
The single best way of improving your chances is to do a degree in programming.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

1. Telephone: We're learning that e-mail is bad because people are lazy.
2. Glass of water.
3. Games consoles: I have a PS3 and a 360 on my desk plugged into a 28-inch HD-TV.
4. Two PCs: I have a laptop for travel, presentations and working from home.
5. Berocca – an über-vitamin pill.

Water baby
"I always have a glass of water on the go. Rehydration helps keep me alert and in a good mood. It stops headaches, anger and fatigue."



MY GAME IDEA

NAME: BODYSHOCK
COPYRIGHT: MARC BERTAGNE

WHAT IS IT: Once a haven of healthy living, the fabulous city of Frappeture has turned to fat since its crazed scientists discovered donut-mix secreting slugs. Following a vicious sugar-rush-induced turf war the donut-addicted population are slowly being driven mad as their fatty food source disappears...

HOW IT PLAYS: A first-person shooter in which you must take on the donut gathering Big Fatties and Little Munchers. Using different types of donut mix against your enemies can change their behaviour to your advantage. Red mix for example will make Big Daddies go on a feeding frenzy until they explode.

POTENTIAL BEST BIT: Watching a Big Fatty vomit before it explodes. Nice.

JUDGEMENT

This is what *BioShock* would have been like if it was made by Channel 4's Dr Gillian McKeith. Still, we're all for comedy twists on games, and so much the better if they involve eating donuts and watching overweight aggressors explode in a shower of guts.

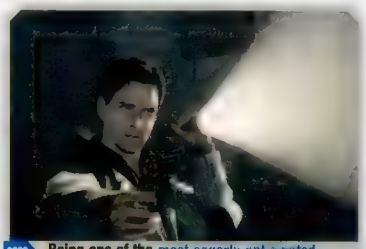
QUOTE FOR THE BOX:
"WILL YOU SACRIFICE YOUR HEALTH TO SAVE FRAPPETURE?"

MOVE OVER SHIGSY MIYAMOTO – SHOW US *YOUR* GAME!

Could your game idea be the next *Halo* or *Mario*? Tell us about it and draw us a screenshot and you could find fame... and some free games! Send them to My Game Idea, *GamesMaster*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW or email gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk. Go on, get drawing!

Haze, *Metal Gear Solid 4*, *GTA IV*, *Alan Wake* and *Brothers in Arms* are being set unrealistic release dates that result in them being pushed back, disappointing thousands of eager gamers. Why can't publishers just set realistic dates and meet them?
Andy Davies, email

We feel your pain, Andy. It's hugely annoying when games get delayed, but making a great game takes a lot of time for lots of different reasons. Frustrating as it is we'd rather have occasional delays and better games than less-than-perfect, rushed-out releases.



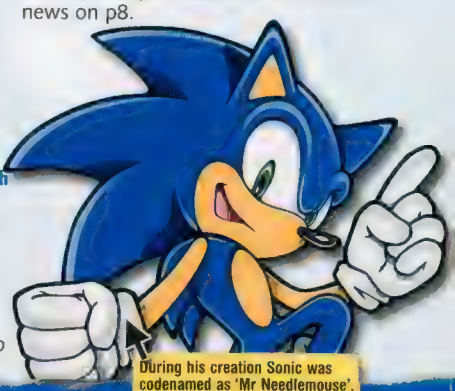
Being one of the most eagerly anticipated games of the year has its ups and downs...

Hedgehog Fancier

Dear *GamesMaster*,
Okay, I know I'm about a year late or something but I think my childhood hero Sonic is undergoing a bit of a revival. I just borrowed my mate's copy of *The Secret Rings* and I have to say it's the best Sonic game I've played in years. I loved the extreme speeds (without boost pads) and the fact that you only play as Sonic. Also the Arabian nights theme means there are entirely new stages, instead of the usual beaches, casinos and Eggman's base. All I ask of Sega is that they keep it up, build on *Sonic and the Secret Rings* successes not only for the Wii but 360 too.
Nikyle McIntosh

PS. Would it kill Sega to make a new *Jet Set Radio* and *Shenmue*? Who's with me?

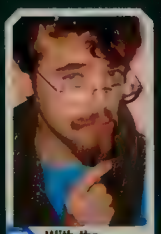
Hi Nikyle – we're definitely with you on the matter of reviving *Jet Set Radio* and *Shenmue*. Come on Sega, you know it makes sense. Want more Sonic? Then take a look at the new *Sonic Chronicles* game on page 22 – a DS RPG from *Mass Effect* developers BioWare. There's also some *hot* Sonic news on p8.



During his creation Sonic was codenamed as 'Mr Needlemouse'.

We ♥ Old Games

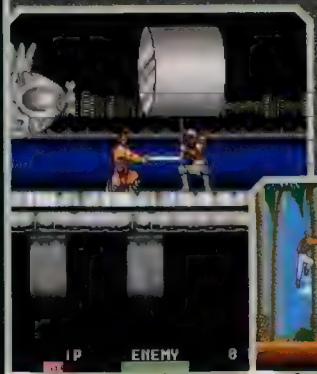
This month: the underappreciated madness of old videogame company Data East...



With the unkempt and studious rector of retro, Adam Norton.

TRIO THE PUNCH (DATA EAST, 1989, ARCADE)

Trio is almost the *WarioWare* of rubbish, generic sidescrollers. Levels are over in a trice, baffling characters spew from the sides of the screen at all times, your characters are a range of proud cliches, and a roulette haphazardly powers you up at the end of each bit. Lucky! Cha cha cha! And those are just the basics. One minute you're battling a giant foot that crushes you into a bitty dwarf, the next moment you're hurtling through a ninja-filled sewer. A must-play mishmash of madness, then, and also quite, quite terrible.



A Jōmon-era dogū sculpture. And, er, an enormous mallet.

Great level names, such as 'Peeking'.

A special attack. On the eyes. There's a statue of this in *Boogie Wings*, sneakily.

THE CLIFFHANGER: EDWARD RANDY (DATA EAST, 1990, ARCADE)

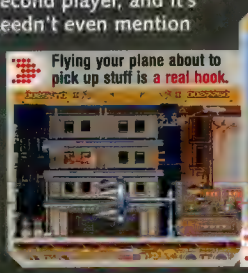
In the manner of *Sly* 'Quite Possibly Based on James Bond' *Spy* before it, this is a giant tip of the Fedora to Indiana Jones. But, thankfully, it's much better (and more original) than its dinner-jacketed colleague – so, while you've got versions of the Venetian speedboat chase and a bit with a giant enemy tank, there's also a giant waving its robotic arms through scaffolding and a level where you're hopping from plane to plane in the midst of a storm. The levels are all auto-scrolling set-pieces while the sprites are delicious.

Swing from the rail like a very cross pair of fuzzy dice.

Amusingly Ed yells "Aah!" inappropriately throughout.

BOOGIE WINGS (DATA EAST, 1992, ARCADE)

Boogie Wings is a thoroughly arresting spectacle, even to *Parodius* veterans: a sugar-rush of sight gags and details that whirl intoxicatingly beneath you as you blast foes from the skies. Or, indeed, pluck your foes from the skies with your hook, and launch them into other foes. Nearly everything in this sprite-parade is liftable, from statues to soldiers to the second player, and it's such fun that we needn't even mention the remarkable range of vehicles that you can commandeer after being shot down. But what the heck, eh? Giraffes! Pogo sticks! Excellent.



Flying your plane about to pick up stuff is a real hook.

Rampaging elephants in the city? You didn't get those in *Choplifter*.

NITRO BALL (DATA EAST (ODDLY ENOUGH), 1992, ARCADE)

You may remember the late '80s Arnie movie *The Running Man*, or the '90s game loosely based on it, the excellent *Smash TV*. *Nitro Ball* takes this 'violent gladiatorial combat as garish TV game show' theme and mashes it pleasingly but bizarrely with pinball, so, uniquely, your enemies roll backwards when shot, and bounce off bumpers and into holes. You can even turn into a ball yourself at points!

There are no flippers here.

Bounce like an overly optimistic cheque.

"My hair's solid gold, and my jacket's woven from a couple of small nebulae."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Characters that time forgot

PLUCKY RUSSKI KARNOV

Then: This Santa-stomached Russian firebreather debuted in a mediocre arcade platformer in 1987, before dazzling his corporate superiors (or possibly slightly amusing a few programmers) and cropping up in loads of other Data East releases. He's a number of baddies in *Trio the Punch*, for instance, along with *Tumblepop* and *Bad Dudes*, and even pops up as a fighter in the *Street Fighter 2* rip-off *Fighter's History*.

Now: SNK have acquired the rights to the *Fighter's History* characters (presumably as part of an intricate practical joke), so it's worryingly conceivable that we could see Karnov walloping Terry Bogard in a future *King of Fighters*.

'The brave warrior that stands alone against the evil that rules the world,' says the poster.

LOST IN TRANSLATION!

When Japanese and English collide!

THE INTRO TO CHELNOV (ATOMIC RUNNER)...

Data East (or Atomic Runner)'s unusual shooting/man-going-for-a-jog game *Chelnov* has a splendidly mangled intro – so splendidly mangled, in fact, that it can't be mere coincidence that it only flashes up for a split-second at the start. To save straining your eyes (or, er, pressing the screenshot button a few times), we've printed it here in full for your own delectation (misspellings and all)...

'One windy, disaster occurred, an explosion of nuclear power station.'

'Radio-Activity poured over many people. A coal miner Chelnov was among them.'

'He survived the deadly accident, however, he was possessed with an abnormal power.'

'He made up his mind to act in the cause of justice, turning down devilish disasterian's enchanting solicitation.'

GO AHEAD AND FIGHT! CHELNOV, THE INVINCIBLE WARRIOR, CHELNOV!

GAMES MASTER is... 200!

THE MASTER OF GAMES SINCE 1993

OI! You at the back there! What do you mean you haven't filled your form in?! Stop FANNYING around and get VOTING!

T[illegible] LAST CHANCE [illegible] Wednesday the 7 May [illegible] time! Only one more week to make sure that *Resident Evil 4*'s shady arms dealer gets knighted in GM's hallowed halls of gaming!

What's that you say? *Scooby Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed* is the greatest game you've ever played!' You might have gone completely mental in the brain, but you'll never have your voice heard if you don't fill that form in! Think Link's 'just a boy girl' (well he does wear tights AND have an unnatural love for the horse)? Or what about Kratos, the self-proclaimed *God of War*? Think he's all mouth and no trousers? Now's your chance to let us know.

In just one month we'll be unveiling the 100 greatest characters of all time and the 100 greatest games ever to grace our TV screens. And the only way we can do that is if you post/email/text your votes! Email, normal papery mail, whatever takes your fancy – just make sure we get all your forms by 15 May...

LAST CHANCE TO VOTE!!!

Invitation to GM's 200th issue

To: *Loyal reader of GM*

You are cordially invited to *GamesMaster* magazine's 200th issue celebration.

- **Where: Issue 200**
- **When: On sale Wednesday 4 June**

HOW TO VOTE

1. Text – Text the word BIRTHDAY followed by a space then your game names and character names in order to 87474. Each text will cost 50p. For full terms and conditions see page 96.
2. Email – Send your top five games and top five characters to us at gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk. With 'GM is 200' as the subject.
3. Post – Fill in the form on this page and send it to GM is 200, GamesMaster, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Don't want to cut up your GM? Write it out on a piece of paper. Closing date for votes is 15 May.

My five greatest games of all time are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

and my least favourite game of all time is:

_____

My five greatest games characters of all time are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

and my least favourite game character of all time is:

_____

R.S.V.P.
GET US YOUR VOTE BY
15 MAY!

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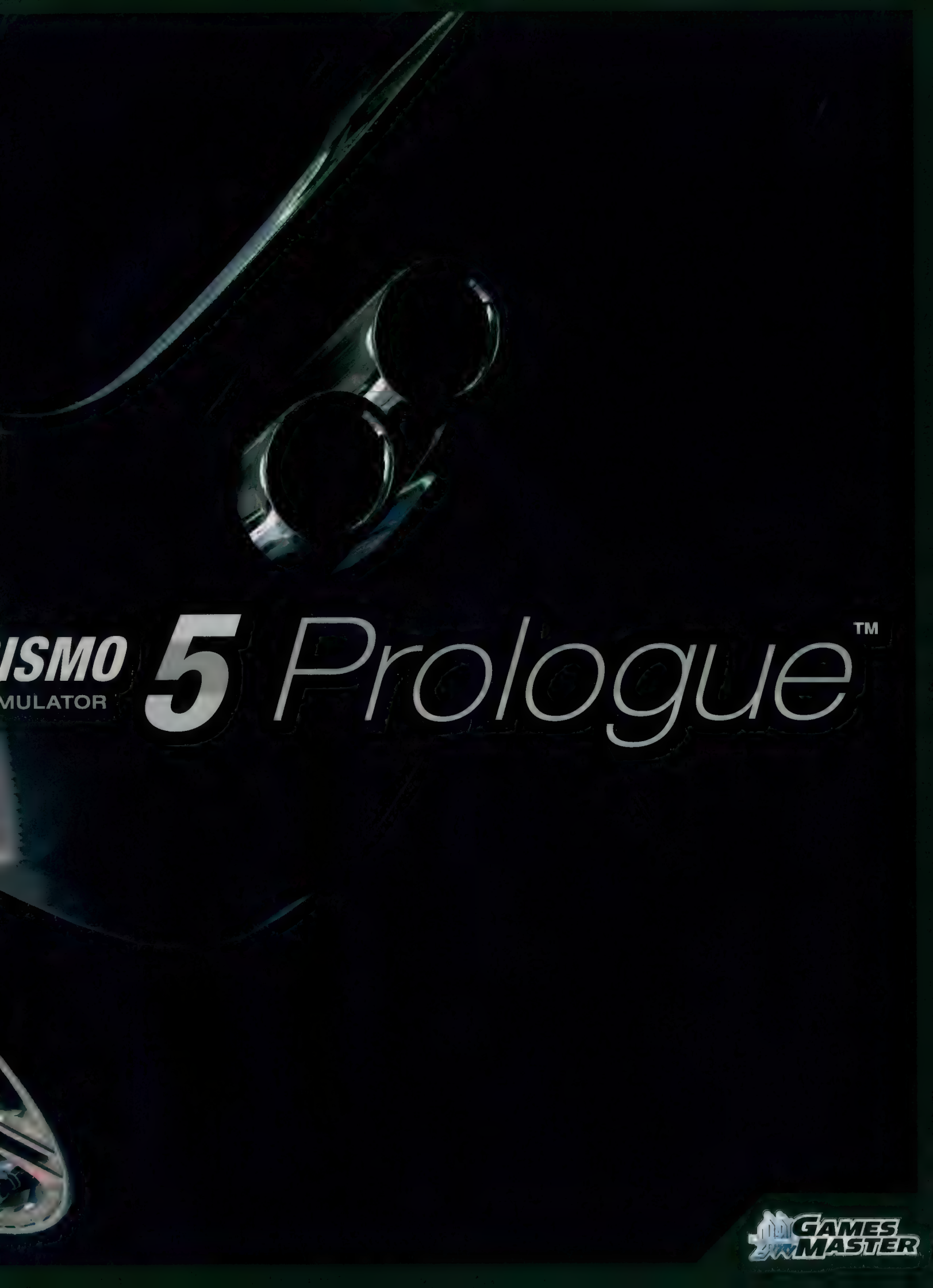
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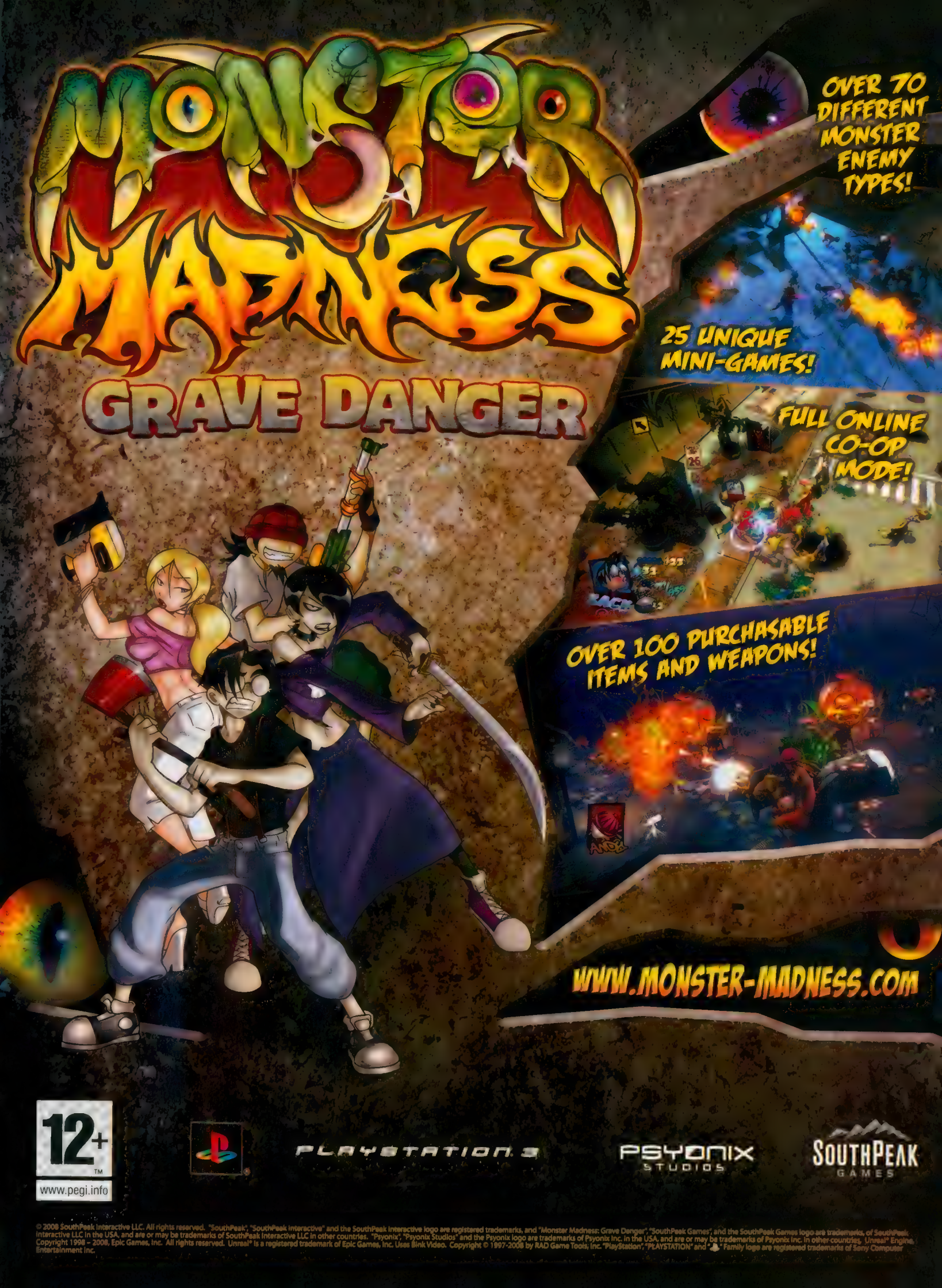

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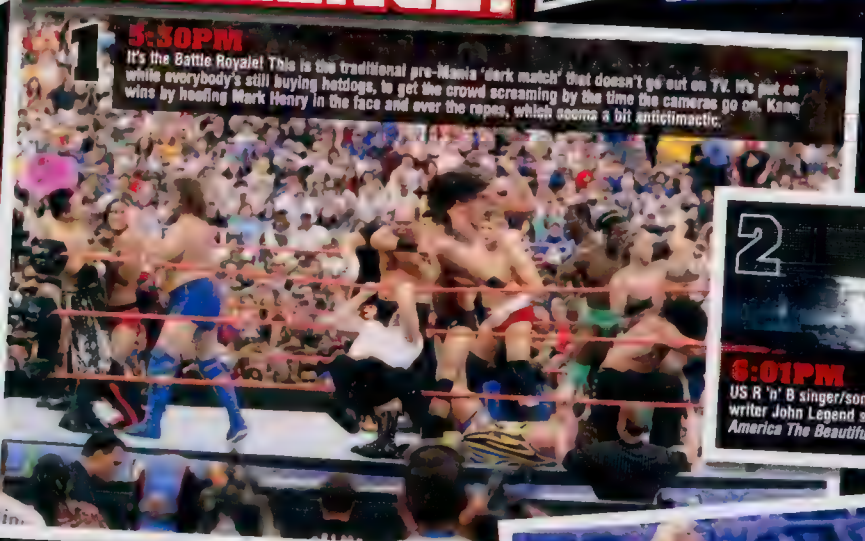
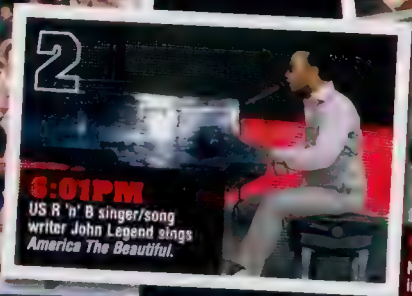
GM LAYS THE SMACK-DOWN AT... WRESTLEMANIA XXIV

LET BATTLE COMMENCE!

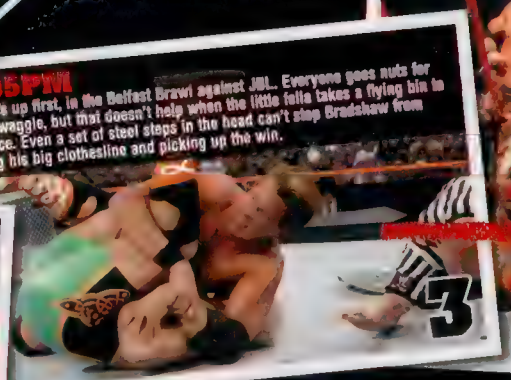
Take your seats for a ringside blow-by-blow account of the biggest scrap on the planet!



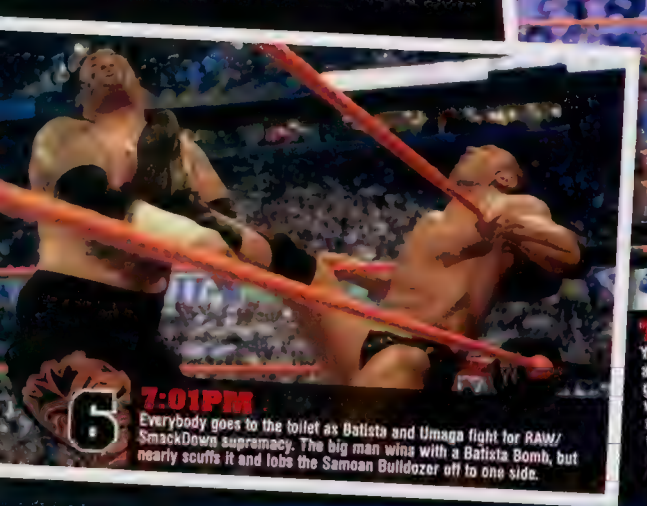
1 5:30PM
It's the Battle Royale! This is the traditional pre-Mania 'dark match' that doesn't go out on TV. It's put on while everybody's still buying hotdogs, to get the crowd screaming by the time the cameras go on. Kane wins by heeling Mark Henry in the face and over the ropes, which seems a bit anticlimactic.



2 6:01PM
US R 'n' B singer/song writer John Legend sings *America The Beautiful.*

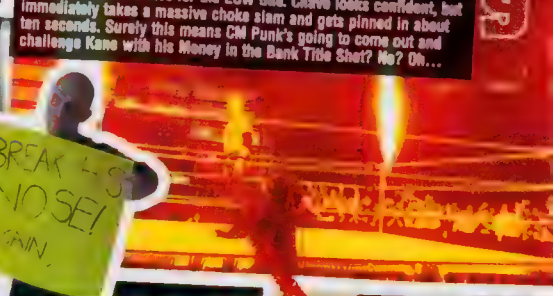


3 6:05PM
Finley's up first, in the Belfast Brawl against JBL. Everyone goes nuts for Hornswaggle, but that doesn't help when the little fella takes a flying bin to the face. Even a set of steel steps in the head can't stop Bradshaw from hitting his big clothesline and picking up the win.

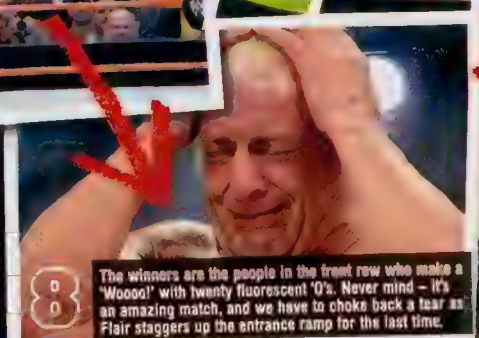


6 7:01PM
Everybody goes to the toilet as Batista and Umaga fight for RAW/SmackDown supremacy. The big man wins with a Batista Bomb, but nearly scuffs it and lobs the Samoan Bulldozer off to one side.

7 7:16PM
Yeah! It's Flair's retirement match, and we've come prepared – grabbing a big W out of our bag, we pass out 'O's to the four people along our row. We quickly realise we've been outdone, though, as *everyone else in the crowd* does the same thing.



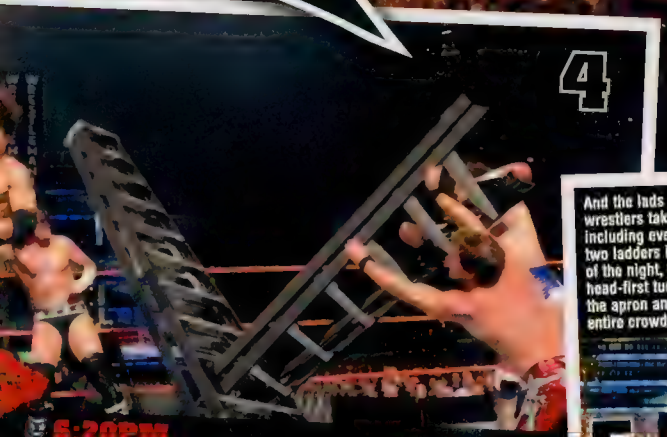
9 7:54PM
Now it's Kane vs Chavo for the ECW title. Chavo looks confident, but immediately takes a massive choke slam and gets pinned in about ten seconds. Surely this means CM Punk's going to come out and challenge Kane with his Money in the Bank Title Shot? No? Oh...



8 The winners are the people in the front row who make a 'Woooo!' with twenty fluorescent 'O's. Never mind – it's an amazing match, and we have to choke back a tear as Flair staggers up the entrance ramp for the last time.

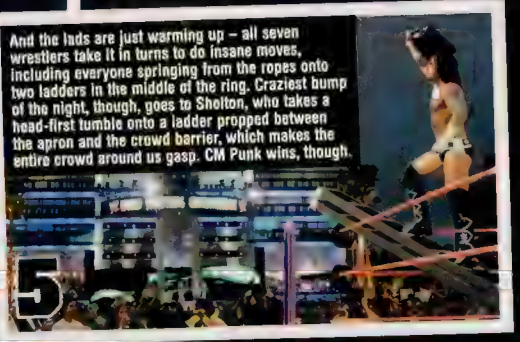
10

Joel was here, doing his best to blend in with the crazy crowd!



5:20PM

It's time for Money in The Bank! We didn't think there was anything left to see being done with a ladder, but we're quickly proved wrong as – aaaaah! – John Morrison does a *moonsault* holding a full-sized stepladder.



And the lads are just warming up – all seven wrestlers take it in turns to do insane moves, including everyone springing from the ropes onto two ladders in the middle of the ring. Craziest bump of the night, though, goes to Shelton, who takes a head-first tumble onto a ladder propped between the apron and the crowd barrier, which makes the entire crowd around us gasp. CM Punk wins, though.

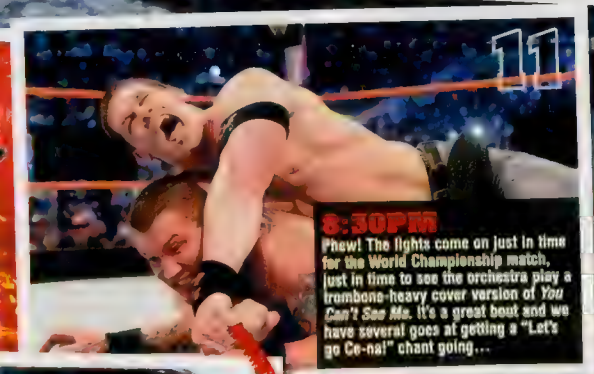
MANIA MAGIC

Can't make it to the big show? There are plenty of other things you can get up to to get that big-event feel...

Make signs! Ideally, you want a blend of references to one of the matches and clever humour. Here, we've gone for a hilarious reference to Floyd Mayweather accidentally busting open Big Show in a pre-Mania skit.

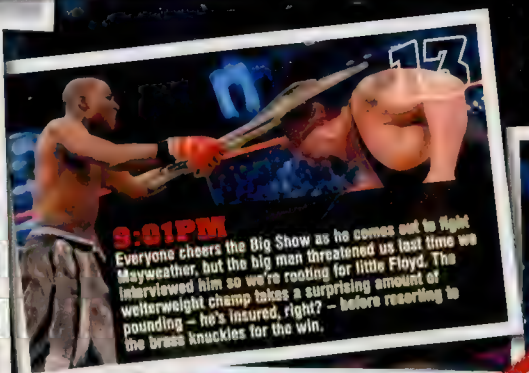
Make bets! *GM* traditionally picks names out of the hat and runs a sweepstake on who's going to win Money in the Bank. Always a good way to make sure someone's rooting for Jericho.

Do moves! Okay, so the WWE advises you not to try them at home, but as long as you stick with ones that don't make you land on your head/spine, you'll probably be fine.



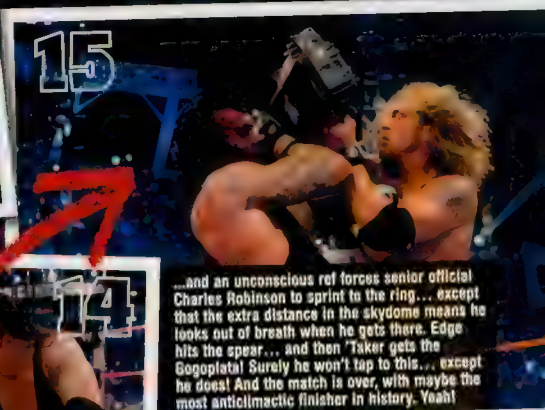
8:30PM

Phew! The lights come on just in time for the World Championship match, just in time to see the orchestra play a trombone-heavy cover version of *You Can't See Me*. It's a great bout and we have several goes at getting a "Let's go Ce-na!" chant going...

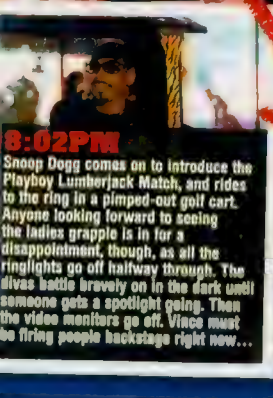


9:01PM

Everyone cheers the Big Show as he comes out to fight Mayweather, but the big man threatened us last time we interviewed him so we're rooting for little Floyd. The welterweight champ takes a surprising amount of pounding – he's insured, right? – before resorting to the brass knuckles for the win.

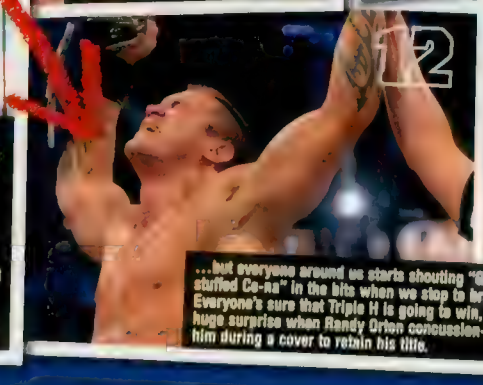


...and an unconscious ref forces senior official Charles Robinson to sprint to the ring... except that the extra distance in the skydome means he looks out of breath when he gets there. Edge hits the spear... and then 'Taker gets the Gogoplata! Surely he won't tap to this... except he does! And the match is over, with maybe the most anticlimactic finisher in history. Yeah!

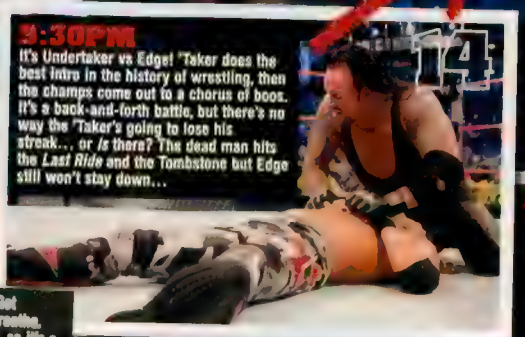


8:02PM

Snoop Dogg comes on to introduce the Playboy Lumberjack Match, and rides to the ring in a pimped-out golf cart. Anyone looking forward to seeing the ladies grapple is in for a disappointment, though, as all the ringlights go off halfway through. The divas battle bravely on in the dark until someone gets a spotlight going. Then the video monitors go off. Vince must be firing people backstage right now...



...but everyone around us starts shouting "Get stuffed Ce-na" in the bits when we stop to breathe. Everyone's sure that Triple H is going to win, so it's a huge surprise when Randy Orton concussion-kicks him during a cover to retain his title.



9:30PM

It's Undertaker vs Edge! 'Taker does the best intro in the history of wrestling, then the champs come out to a chorus of boos. It's a back-and-forth battle, but there's no way the 'Taker's going to lose his streak... or *is* there? The dead man hits the *Last Ride* and the Tombstone but Edge still won't stay down...

TURN OVER... to see *SmackDown vs RAW 2009* in action!

TWO ON ONE

The big selling point this year is the improved tag team action. There's no more going it alone while your partner gets a kicking – you share a momentum bar with your partner, so you're forced to work together.

Hot tags mean that if you're getting a real beating but you manage to crawl towards your partner, they'll burst into the ring with full momentum and lay into the opposing team. There's a catch, though: although you'll clothesline the first man automatically, there's a window of opportunity for the other player to reverse you as you go for the classic punch-the-man-standing-on-the-apron move.

There are more actions for the man in the corner to perform. Apart from wandering up and down the apron at will – a feature that was actually in early *WWE SmackDowns* – your man can now shake the ropes or slap the turnbuckle to get the crowd pumped up. Or if your partner's hogging all the action, you can go for the classic 'blind tag' by slapping them on the back and clambering into the ring.

There are sneakier tag moves, too. If the other team wander too close, you can punch them or grab their arms, or pull the ropes down as they're trying to bounce against them to send them flying over the top. And, of course, you can do the textbook pretend-you're-trying-to-get-in-the-ring move to distract the ref if your partner's getting pinned or wants to fetch a chair.

PS2 PS3 X360 DS PSP
- OUT: TBC
- PUBLISHER: THQ
- DEVELOPER: YUKE'S
- ONLINE: MATCHES, DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT
- PLAYERS: 1-6

WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2009

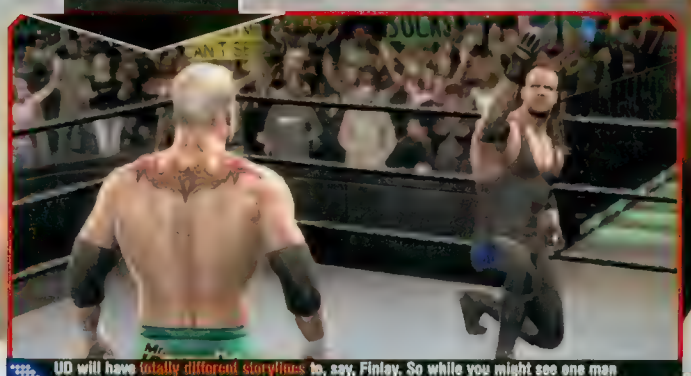
Surely the Randy Orton vs John Cena feud can't go on any longer, can it?

We weren't just at WrestleMania to upset the wrestlers, of course – we got a look at the game, too...

THQ are promising loads of improvements for the next-gen *SmackDown*, including improved online play and downloadable content that they're completely refusing to talk about at the moment. We grabbed them in a Cobra Clutch and got them to spill the beans on some of this season's biggest improvements.

NOW YOU GO TO WRESTLEMANIA!

'The Road to WrestleMania' is the new story mode, and it's set to be short but deep. Instead of dragging on for years, it takes place over the three-month gap between the Royal Rumble and Mania itself, traditionally the time when every superstar goes nuts in the scramble for a main event title shot. With the time-frame shortened, every wrestler will have their own storylines appropriate to them – so instead of seeing the Undertaker flirting in the girls' locker room, you're more likely to catch him feuding with his brother or forming a new Ministry. Storylines are being developed from scratch by the SmackDown writers, so it'll be interesting to see what they come up with...



UD will have totally different storylines to, say, Finlay. So while you might see one man feuding with a midget, the other's more likely to get involved in a title challenge matchup.

A cheeky grin from the Undertaker there, as he grabs Kenny's trachea to set up the classic slam. Alternatively, you could make him kiss his bicep or flick 'V's at the crowd.

WHAT A MOVE!

Don't think the F-U move is devastating enough? Then you need the Create-A-Finisher option. Here you're given up to 12 animation 'slots' to make any move you like – whether it's one your favourite old-school wrestler did, that thing you saw someone do in a grainy Youtube clip, or just something you've made up yourself. You might start with your opponent's head tucked between your legs, for instance, then go for a taunt. Then you could flip them up onto your shoulders – in either the power bomb or torture rack position... and then you can slam them down however you like. It's full of moves that aren't even allowed in the WWE any more (like the Brainbuster) and with at least five variations on the simple piledriver, you'll be tinkering with head-busting meanness for hours.

There are more tag team moves, too. Each team will have its own tag finisher – so, for instance, the Hardys can do the Twist of Fate move followed by a Swanton Bomb – but they'll also have loads of double dropkicks, spiked piledrivers and other horrific things to do to a man's kidneys. Ouch...

Cena's a fan of videogames – his favourite game is *Fist of the North Star*.

Mr Kennedy feuded with Shawn Michaels last year – who's next for the Kenton Bomb (his finishing move)?

BRIAN WILLIAMS

Q&A CREATIVE MANAGER

You've mentioned the AI's going to improve. How well, it'll act more like the real wrestler. So if Randy Orton knocks you down, now he'll stand over you and give you a derisive look.

Have you been checking out fansites online?

Yeah, there's a good website dedicated to wrestling moves. So you'll be able to make just about anything you can come up with in your head. What's cool is that there's even commentary support, so commentators say 'Oh man, what's that? I've never seen that before!'

Do you do moves on each other in the office?

One of our designers is a former wrestler, so he's been teaching me some holds. And when Dan gets out of line, I scoop-slam him sometimes.

DAN RYAN

Q&A PRODUCER, DS VERSION

So what's changed, Dan?

Last time the game was really polarising and people want the more traditional, action-packed experience, so we're kind of going for a reboot this season.

What else is new?

We're throwing some minigames into unique situations like finishers and submissions, to make things very different from the PS3 version.

Brian told us you've got a wrestler on the staff. What's that like?

Yeah, his name's Justin Leaper. He used to wrestle in Minnesota and he went to Ken Kennedy's wedding. It's cool, because he knows how the storylines work and he's writing some original ones just for us.

Create-A-Finisher's set to be huge this year. What's your favourite finisher?

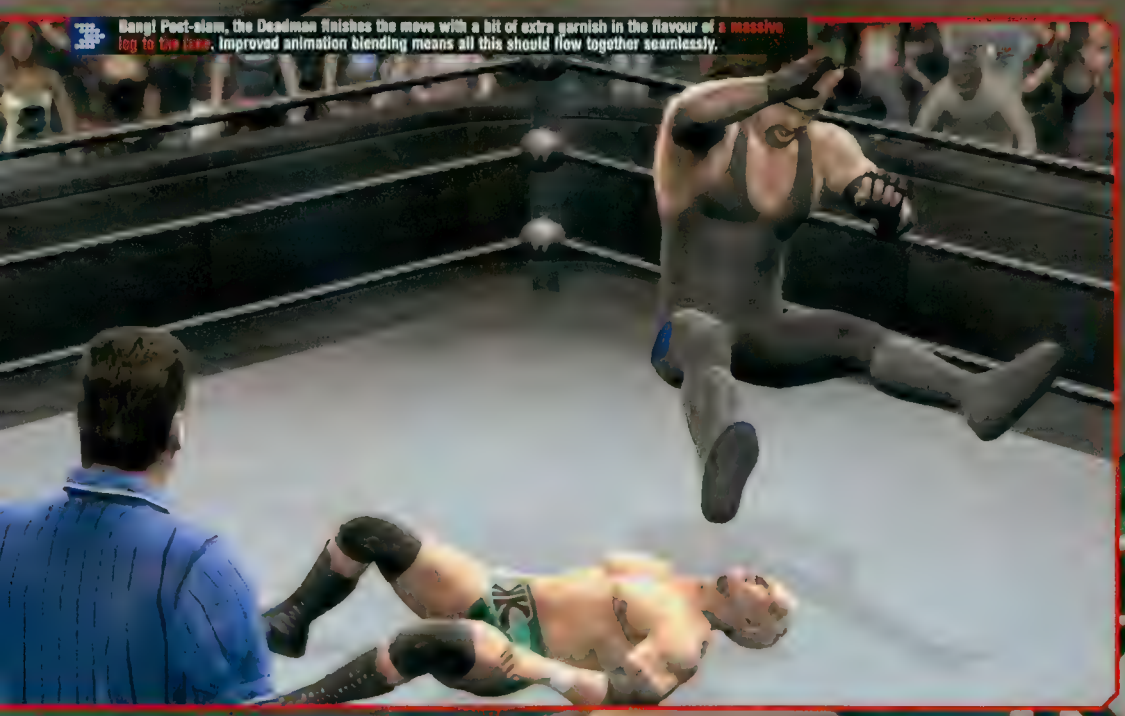
The Canadian Destroyer's probably the best finishing move of all time, although I used to love the five-star frog splash. That was a thing of beauty. I used to love the Macho Man's old elbow, too – it was like he hovered. And the Ghetto Stomp, baby.

COMING ON STRONG

Because everybody loved the taunt-miming so much last year, Yuke's have added the option to dance around like a tool while you're on the ramp. As your wrestler makes his entrance, prompts appear on the screen urging you to follow along as Cena salutes, Hardy waves and Michaels poses. Mirror their actions closely enough, and you'll get a pre-match boost in momentum. Woo!

Whether you're an ageing member of D-X or the ever-exciting Matt Hardy, everyone loves the traditional crotch chop.

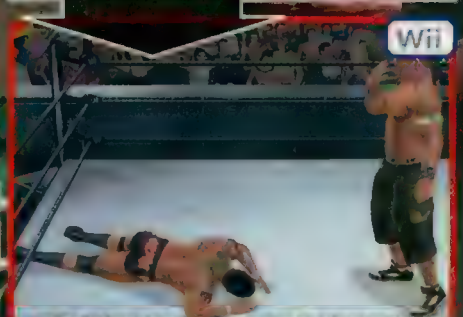
Mr Kennedy and Randy Orton take on John Cena and Chris Jericho – the Cena/Orton rumble has been going on for yonks...



Bang! Post-slam, the Deadman finishes the move with a bit of extra garnish in the flavour of a massive leg to the face. Improved animation blending means all this should flow together seamlessly.

GOOD LOSER

Whether you win or lose, you can use the Wii-mote to choose what you do after the match. Feeling aggrieved? Go for the shot to the plums, or stomp your opponent while they're on the floor. Feeling sporting? Shake their hand. Feeling sneaky? Pretend to shake their hand, then kick them in their unmentionables. But make sure you do it before *they* do...

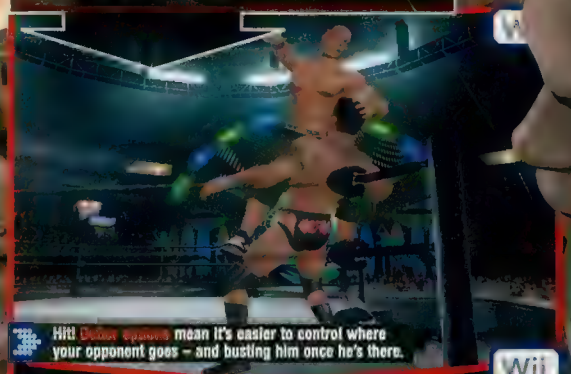


The fight may be over but as soon as he gets up we'll shake his hand or kick him in the family jewels. Probably the latter.

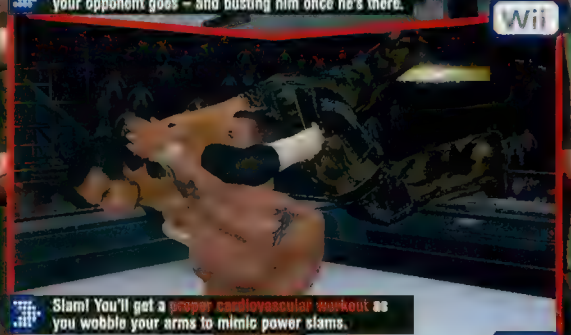
Chris Jericho will be putting his Intercontinental Championship on the line.

WW-Wii

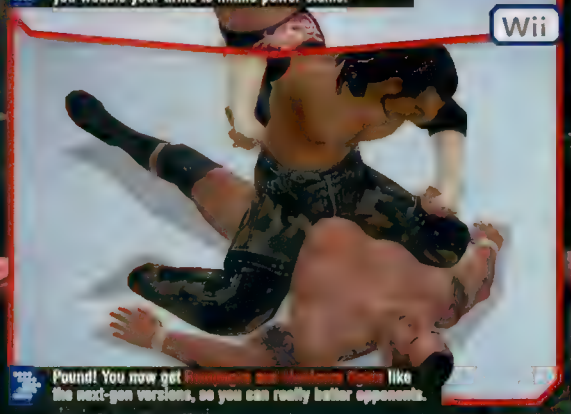
The Wii version's been massively expanded to provide a range of options more like the other *SmackDown* games – so now you'll be able to get involved in table, ladder and cage matches, as well as tag team and triple threat bouts. The control's also been improved so that you feel more like you're doing the moves you're seeing on-screen. But what else is new?



Hit! Better options mean it's easier to control where your opponent goes – and busting him once he's there.



Slam! You'll get a proper cardiovascular workout as you wobble your arms to mimic power slams.



Pound! You now get Finishers and Signature Moves like the next-gen versions, so you can really batter opponents.

And now Chris Jericho wants a slice of the action as Kennedy tees up Cena for a tag team move...

ALL NEW!

Probably the best unique feature on the DS version is the Story mode. Here you'll be able to potter around backstage, rile up wrestlers and even go and heckle Vince, all in pursuit of a title shot. As the season goes on you can build up your stats until you're in serious title contention.

Could this be the feud-building *SmackDown* we've dreamed about rather than an inferior little brother to the console versions? It's looking good so far so let's hope so...

There's a much bigger variety of matches this time, including cages and ladders. You'll also be able to play via Wi-Fi, so you can take on other grapplers.

DS

After a slightly lukewarm reception for the wobbly minigame predictability of last year's DS *SmackDown*, this year's game gets a new developer. Tose, best known for crazy scrapper *Rocket Slam*, have shaken up the movement system and reinvented the small-screen brawler. Here's how it works...

You move around with the D-pad, and go on the offence with the stylus. Tapping in different spots on your opponent does different strikes – here, we've gone for the classic European uppercut.

Drawing a circle on your opponent grapples. From here, you draw a line to indicate what you want to do – so going straight up might do a vertical suplex, while a line across the ring does an Irish whip.

The reversal system's based on popular Japanese wrestling game *Fire Pro Wrestling*, so it's difficult to hit big, signature moves early in the match – you'll need to wear your opponent down first.

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ Create-A-Finisher. It's genuinely brilliant, and we can't wait to start tinkering with it

GM HATES

- Aren't some of these tag team 'innovations' things we've seen in older games?

MOST WANTED RATING

There's lots still under wraps. Will the downloadable content be new wrestlers, or just the odd banner? Will the storylines make sense? Many, many questions...

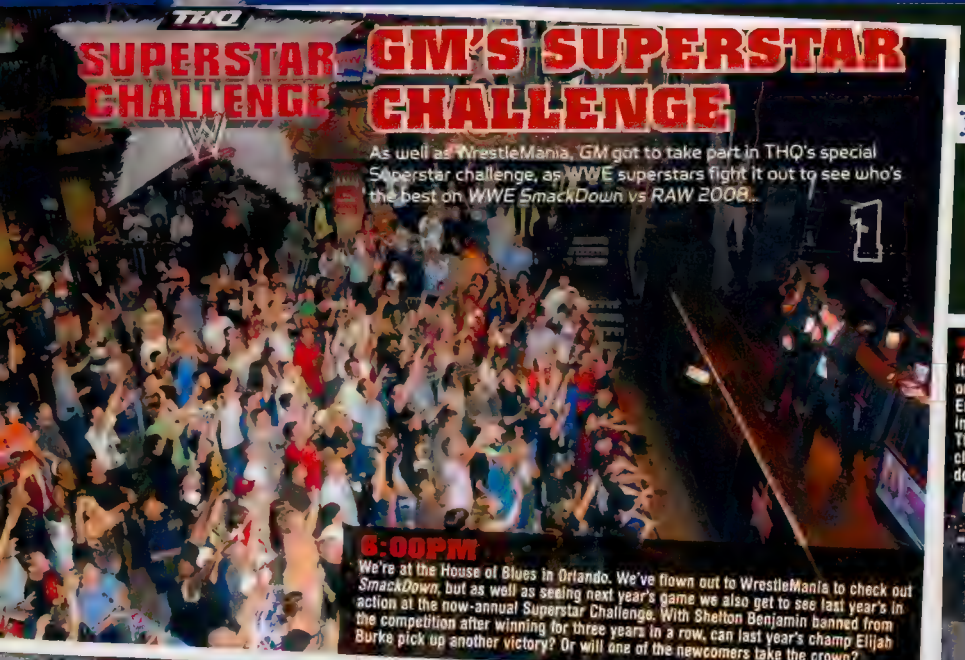
4

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .....SmackDown Vs Raw 2008, 86% (360, PS3) 55% (DS)
BIGGEST RIVAL: ..... TNA Impact
OUT SOONER:.....Smash Bros Brawl

GM'S SUPERSTAR CHALLENGE

As well as WrestleMania, GM got to take part in THQ's special Superstar challenge, as WWE superstars fight it out to see who's the best on *WWE SmackDown vs RAW 2008*...



8:00PM

We're at the House of Blues in Orlando. We've flown out to WrestleMania to check out *SmackDown*, but as well as seeing next year's game we also get to see last year's in action at the now-annual Superstar Challenge. With Shelton Benjamin banned from the competition after winning for three years in a row, can last year's champ Elijah Burke pick up another victory? Or will one of the newcomers take the crown?

7:00PM

As the wrestlers gear up for the event, we ask Finlay who he'd most 'Love to fight'. 'You!' snarls the shillelagh-swinging Irish charmer. We make our excuses and scarper to the spectator's gallery.

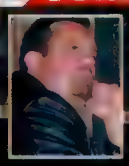
FINLAY

Are you any good at games, Finlay?
Me? No. My daughters have got a few consoles, but I always end up taking them off them.
So you don't fancy your chances? Have you been putting in any special practise with Hornswoggle?
I just said I can't play games! Are you deaf as well as English?
Erm, sorry. Who would you most 'Love to fight'?
Right now? You.
Erk...

7:15PM

It's time for the consumer challenge! This is a four-man tournament between the best online *SmackDown* players – one from Italy, two from America... and one from England! The English contender (who's 'being' Umaga) wins his first match easily, but in the final he starts to take a kicking from his cocky US counterpart ('being' Batista). The American's coming out on top and lands a Batista Bomb for the pin... but he's too close to the ropes! The ref calls rope break and the overconfident yank steps back to do a taunt – letting our man slip out of the ring and get his breath back.

TOMMY DREAMER

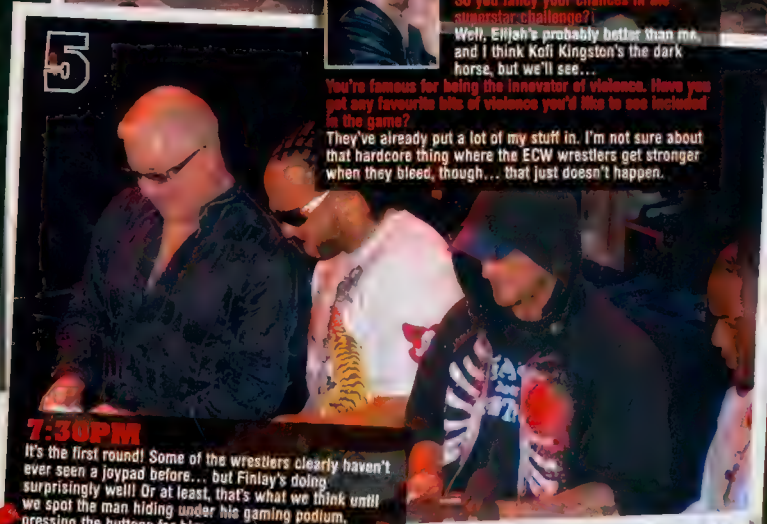


Do you play games much, Tommy?
Are you kidding me? I've got every games console right back to the Atari 2600 and the ColecoVision (old console).
So you fancy your chances in the superstar challenge?
Well, Elijah's probably better than me, and I think Kofi Kingston's the dark horse, but we'll see...
You're famous for being the innovator of violence. Have you got any favourite bits of violence you'd like to see included in the game?
They've already put a lot of my stuff in. I'm not sure about that hardcore thing where the ECW wrestlers get stronger when they bleed, though... that just doesn't happen.

DARREN LEVOCAH

How long have you been playing *SmackDown*?
Years. I've been a fan of the WWE since I was a little kid.
How did you get into this tournament?
I played online and became the best player in a league in the UK. Then I went to Scotland and took out two opponents up there, one on one. Then made my way here!
How did you get so good at it?
Practice, I guess. And timing, because the game's all about timing. It's more about knowing the character you're up against than the character you're using, because if you're against a power character, you've got to know when to avoid their power moves. Same with a submission character too.
It looked like the guy was winning.
Yeah, he tried to give the crowd a show, which is right, because it's about the fans at the end of the day. He could have had me in the last two minutes, any time – but he left it a bit too long.
If they could put anything in the next *SmackDown*, what would you like to see?
More characters. They've got half of the roster of one show in the game, and there are loads more wrestlers that deserve to be in the game.

As Batista follows, the plucky Brit jumps on the offensive, landing a series of counters and reversals in a dazzling display of chain-wrestling. By the time they both get back in the ring, he's got enough momentum to land a Samoan Spike... and makes sure he drags The Animal into the centre of the ring to pick up the 1-2-3. It's the perfect come-from-behind victory! The crowd goes absolutely berserk.



7:30PM

It's the first round! Some of the wrestlers clearly haven't ever seen a joypad before... but Finlay's doing surprisingly well! Or at least, that's what we think until we spot the man hiding under his gaming podium, pressing the buttons for him...

8:00PM

Mysterio comes on, and announces that since he's got an injured arm he'll be picking someone out of the crowd to play for him. He chooses a cocky-looking youngster who talks a big game... and turns out not to know any of the buttons. After he gets universally booed off, a small child replaces him in the hot seat... but loses anyway.

8:11PM

Tournament favourites Carlito and Elijah make it to the finals... but in a shock move, Carlito offers to retire in favour of letting ousted champion Shelton Benjamin play.

9

Tournament officials quickly step in to forbid this flouting of the rules, and Elijah cruises to an easy win over the afro-loving apple-chewer. Afterwards, he makes a tearful acceptance speech to universal booing.

8:15

Finlay takes to the stage and starts throwing every bit of merchandise he can find into the crowd. He nearly kills someone with a customised John Cena X360 faceplate, and a minor scrap breaks out over an autographed t-shirt. Crazy.

8:19PM

Mysterio's theme band POD take the stage and play, um, loads of songs off their new album, but not Mysterio's theme. After a long set it's time to retire to bed and dream about next year.

DOCTOR·WHO

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TOP TRUMPS

PlayStation.2

PC DVD

NINTENDO DS.

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REVIEWS

SELECT YOUR STAR!

EVERY GAME ✓ EVERY FORMAT ✓ EVERY MONTH

REVIEWS ED

ABVIOUS LORD SHAUN

There are only four things you need to know this issue: *Grand. Theft. Auto. IV*. A game so immense and influential that virtually every other Western publisher has used it as an excuse for a month off so we can all get it out of our systems. So, while we can't reel off a list of blockbuster titles like normal (*Final Fantasy 7: Crisis Core* and *Iron Man* being the exceptions), it does mean you can get stuck into our massive six-page review. No doubt about it, from its release date to the significant future, Rockstar owns it. *Need For Speed: ProStreet, Guitar Hero 3*... We still have games to take us well into 2008. Best get started, then...

SCORES EXPLAINED

GAMES MASTER GOLD AWARD

90%+ Miss one of these games and you'll regret it forever more.

80-89% A solid and enjoyable game with some moments of brilliance.

70-79% Respectable enough, but not as much fun as it should have been.

60-69% Could have been pretty decent if it wasn't for some irritating flaws.

50-59% Played worse, but we've certainly played better. Average at best.

40-49% There is a game here – but you'll have your work cut out finding it.

30-39% Ever had the squits and vomiting at the same time? Same thing.

20-29% As much fun as picking someone else's scabs.

10-19% Look the door, get a basket ready and feel the shame wash over you.

0-9% Some people are just sick.

Tony Stark and his power armoured suit gets a videogame spin-off. Check out our review. 068

Dean Stark may be an immature 16-year-old, but that doesn't stop him being the star of *Wild Arms 5*. 074

Eastern European Mikolai Bellic is the star of Rockstar's latest gaming epic. 062

This is Setia – now known as Fleurette – the 'gothic Lolita' character in *Dragon Quest Swords*. 070

We're well aware of Altair/Desmond by now as the Arabic assassin returns – on PC and DS (p71). 078

Zack Fair is a 2nd class SOLDIER and star of *Final Fantasy 7: Crisis Core*. 066

Guilty Gear's Dizzy – and her impressive 'under-cleavage' – returns for *XX Accent Core*. 074

Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword's Ryu Hayabusa is getting on a bit. He's been about since 1988! 073

7ft monster Dwight Howard's is one of the stars of *NBA Ballers: Chosen One*. 072

The Starship Enterprise, as featured in *Star Trek Conquest*. Beep, beep... 080

KISS 'N' TELL

Dwight Howard is so tall, one of his basketball party tricks involves jumping up and kissing the rim of the basket. And reaching that last box of cornflakes you can't reach in the supermarket. Possibly.

ENTERPRISING WORK

The first ship to be named Enterprise was the French frigate *l'Enterprise* – a ship captured by the British and renamed *HMS Enterprise* by the Royal Navy.

HOW GM'S REVIEWS WORK

1. The icon you see here tells you which format we played the game on, as well as what other formats it's available on.
2. Here you'll find information about who publishes and develops the game, when its UK release is, how much it costs and how many people can play it.
3. This section tells you what we loved most about the game, as well as what elements annoyed us or what we felt should be changed.
4. This final score tells you whether we think the game is worth buying – but it ISN'T an average of the other three scores.

GM GUARANTEE

ONLY GAMESMASTER

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- We play and judge games on every format
- We only review finished code
- We only use expert, experienced game players
- We're 100% independent
- We want to ensure you never buy a duff game!

• OUT: NOW • PRICE: £44.99 • OTHER FORMATS: XBOX 360 • ONLINE: DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT (XBOX), SEVERAL MULTIPLAYER MODES (XBOX, PS3) • WEB: HTTP://ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/IV • PLAYERS: 1-32 (ONLINE)

PS3

WHAT IS IT?

Probably the most eagerly anticipated game ever. An open sandbox gangster-'em-up...

- 15 radio stations
- More than 20 internet sites

IN-GAME CLIP: He just wants to live in America, but things are never easy for Niko Bellic...

RUN FOR IT

The new Wanted system works on line of sight. When you attract police attention, you'll see a circle on the radar that you need to escape – how big it is depends on how many stars you've got. While you're in it, the police will converge on your last known position, but once you get outside of it you still need to lay low for a few moments in case you run into another cop car. It's a smart system, and it works well. Gotta shake off the heat, man...

Hiding can work for a while: cops don't always automatically know where you are.

If all else fails, of course, there's always the last-ditch sprint from the law.

If you end up back at the cop shop, you'll be stripped of your guns and fined.

grand theft auto IV

GAMES MASTER GOLD AWARD

18

Welcome to America, Niko – we've been waiting a long time for you...

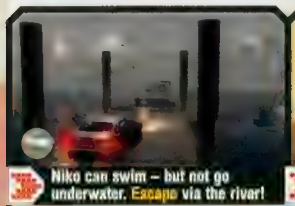
Ever been to Disneyland? It's superficially a bit similar to Alton Towers or the Chessington World of Adventures – it's got rollercoasters and stuff – but the difference is in the details. Every inch of the Magic Kingdom feels like it's been stuffed to bursting with FUN, like uncle Walt himself's gone around with a clipboard finding places that aren't fun enough and squeezing more fun in. Even the queues are fun.

And that's what *GTA IV* is like. This is *Grand Theft Auto* with the nasty bits trimmed off, the rough parts smoothed over and fun squeezed into every available space going. The bad bits are gone, the good bits are better, and there's hardly a moment that goes by without something really exciting happening.

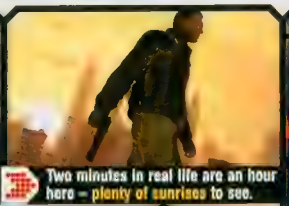
You know the story by now. You play Eastern European immigrant Niko Bellic, lured to Liberty City by his cousin Roman and forced into doing a variety of odd jobs for a lot of bad men. There's none of the turf war or property management from *Vice City* or

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY

Liberty City isn't quite the size of San Andreas, but it's much more detailed. Based on the five boroughs of New York, it's the most impressive metropolis ever to grace a videogame.



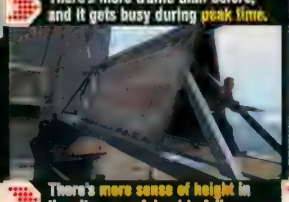
Niko can swim – but not go underwater. Escape via the river!



Two minutes in real life are an hour here – plenty of sunrises to see.

Get lifts or window cleaning platforms up to high areas.

There's more traffic than before, and it gets busy during peak time.



There's more sense of height in the city – careful not to fall.

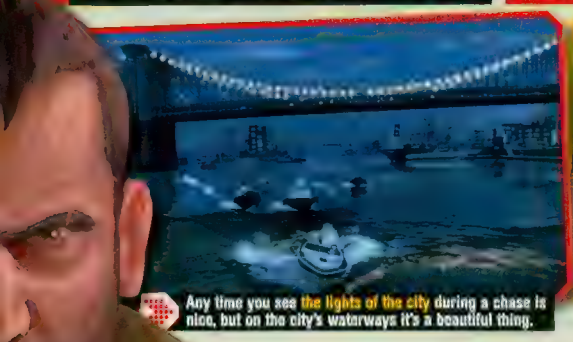
We're most comfortable doing our bad, bad business in the dark.

Niko actually gets to make choices that influence the ending.

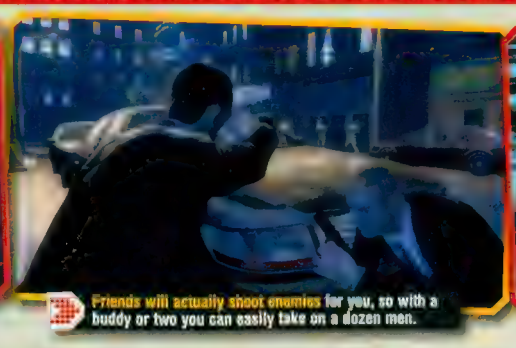
Hopping over low fences is one of the best ways to lose the law. Run rabbit run...

MAGIC MOMENTS

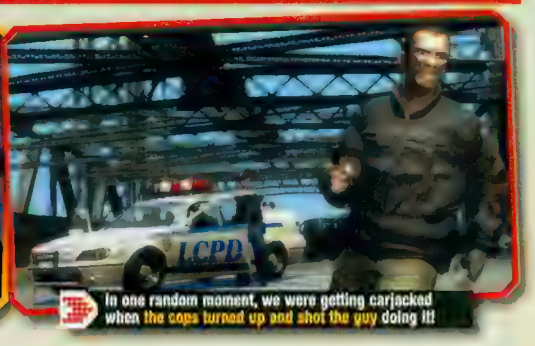
There are some bits in *GTA IV* where everything just comes together to make a gob-dropping moment you won't see anywhere else. These are some of the best that we've seen while playing the game...



Any time you see the lights of the city during a chase is nice, but on the city's waterways it's a beautiful thing.



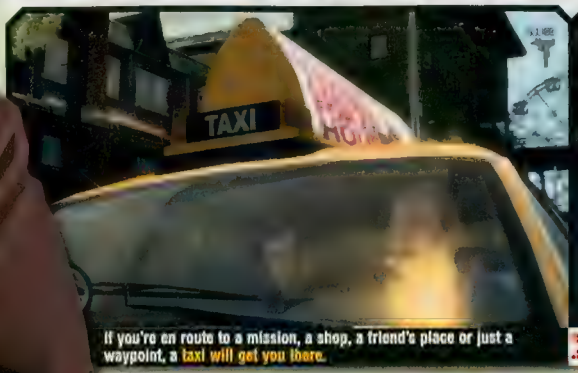
Friends will actually shoot enemies for you, so with a buddy or two you can easily take on a dozen men.



In one random moment, we were getting carjacked when the cops turned up and shot the guy doing it!

WHERE TO, GUV'NOR?

Taxis are a blessing in the huge world of Liberty City. Once you've whistled one down with L1, you can enjoy the scenery, listen to the radio, chat to a friend or just skip the trip to your destination. Lovely.



If you're en route to a mission, a shop, a friend's place or just a waypoint, a taxi will get you there.

Need to go a bit faster or a bit off-road, though? Then just nick it as usual. Sorry pal, but this is an emergency situation...

"RADIO STATIONS REFERENCE WHAT'S GOING ON AND THE SATIRE IS CLEVERER THAN EVER"

San Andreas, because Niko's more interested in tracking down figures from his past than becoming a criminal kingpin.

You're just one man in a massive city, doing what he needs to do to protect his people.

And the city really is massive. It's not the size of San Andreas, but there's no dead space at all: every inch of it's crammed with Rabbis drinking lattes, bankers yapping into mobile phones, hookers arguing about quitting smoking or buskers playing the saxophone. Each area feels different – the gated communities of Aldernay are tranquil in comparison to the crime-ridden streets of Broker or the hustle of Star Junction. Adding to the feel that things are going on without you, the radio stations reference current events – there might be a nod to a corrupt official you'll meet later, an ad for a TV show you can check out back at the safehouse, or a news report about an 'escaped' criminal who you've actually shot and thrown in the river. And the satire on modern life's cleverer than ever – there's an internet-based sitcom called *WTF!*, a reality TV show called *America's Next Top Hooker* and a chance to buy a ringtone called 'Old Lady Breaking Her Hip'.

Of course, you'll want to get on with the missions eventually. This is where you'll notice major improvements to the game mechanics. The new cover system's similar to *Gears of War*'s, letting you cling to bits of cover by tapping R1. Once you're in, you can blind fire over the

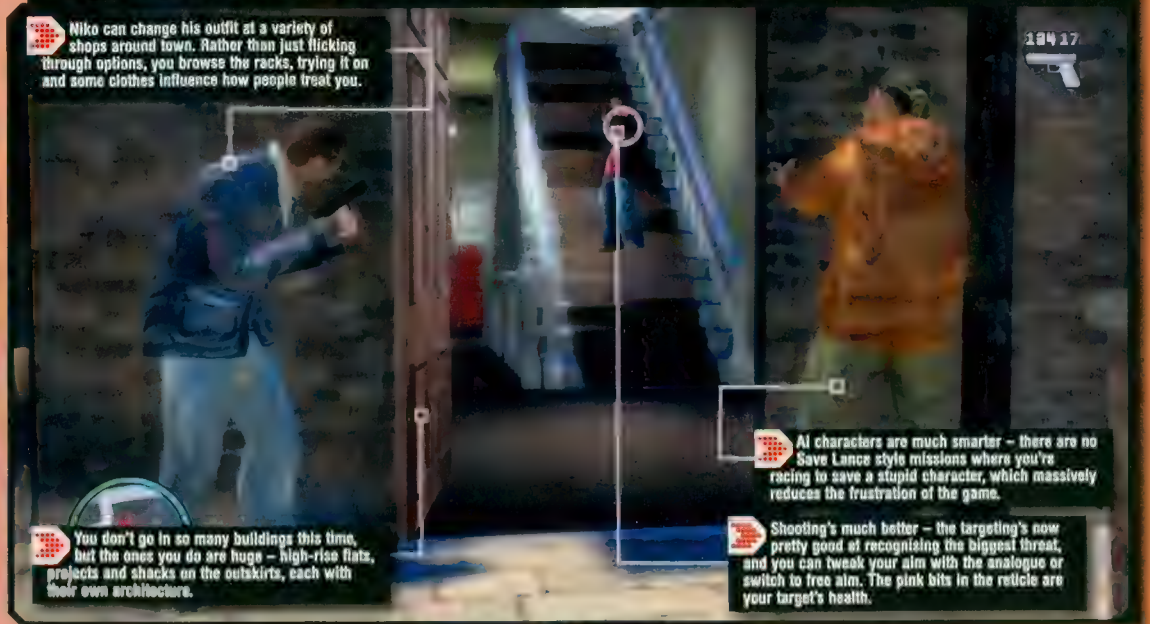
Niko's an ex-military man who saw horrible things in the Balkan wars.

There's only one way to travel in Liberty City – and this is the mode for business...

...and this is the mode for pleasure. That's more like it. Another glorious sunset.

NEW AND IMPROVED

Have you noticed all the minor changes to the *GTA* world? Check out these subtle but ace developments...



Niko can change his outfit at a variety of shops around town. Rather than just flicking through options, you browse the racks, trying it on and some clothes influence how people treat you.

AI characters are much smarter – there are no Save Lance style missions where you're racing to save a stupid character, which massively reduces the frustration of the game.

You don't go in so many buildings this time, but the ones you do are huge – high-rise flats, projects and shacks on the outskirts, each with their own architecture.

Shooting's much better – the targeting's now pretty good at recognising the biggest threat, and you can tweak your aim with the analogue or switch to free aim. The pink bits in the reticle are your target's health.

KEEP YOUR FRIENDS CLOSE...

Certain characters will do you favours if you get friendly enough with them. You might be in the middle of a hectic police chase, but it's always worth answering the phone just in case. You never know, maybe they can help you...

Roman is Niko's cousin. Take him to strip bars and he'll send you free taxis whenever you like.

Little Jacob's a drug dealer from Dukes. Get him on-side and he'll turn up with a trunk full of guns.

Brucie's a steroid-addled carjacker. He'll go on double dates with you and lend you a helicopter.

Packie's one of the five McReary brothers. He'll plant bombs inside cars for you.

Niko's got something of a dark past and skills that aren't always out of place in Liberty City.

As ever, there are loads of different vehicles to commandeer throughout the game.

top or pop out to pop enemies in quick bursts. Combined with the much improved lock-on system, this obliterates the random shooting that plagued earlier *GTA*s – as long as you're sensible and quick on the trigger, you can take on dozens of enemies without even losing health. The driving's similarly improved – feathering the brake with L2 is essential to control the game's gruntier cars, and drifting takes time to master. Every vehicle feels very different – you'll be able to tell the difference between front and rear-wheel drives – but that makes it more satisfying. It's more forgiving too, though. It's practically impossible to flip your car onto its roof, so you won't be failing any missions by taking a kerb too fast. The radar-mounted GPS is a brilliant touch, too: it'll always show you the fastest legal route to your destination, so there's no more taking the wrong exit and getting lost in an industrial park. At the same time, it's always possible to find shortcuts, and evading cops practically forces you to offroad it. The new chase system's much more sensible than before, keeping you safe as long as you're outside the cops' line of sight. You'll come up with all sorts of clever ways of avoiding detection, from zigzagging through side streets to bailing out of a speeding car underneath an underpass.

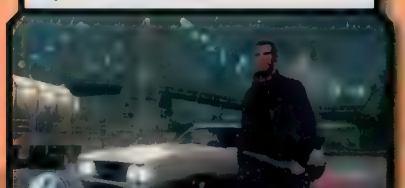
Vlad's a small-time crook who bullies Roman for cash.

TAKE IT EASY

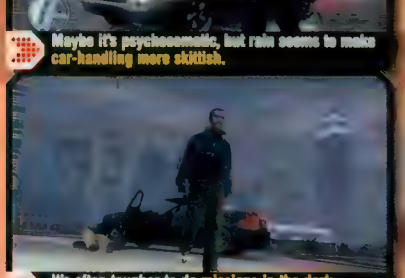
Other subtle differences make things less frustrating, too. Fail any mission and you'll get a text message offering the chance to replay it instantly. If there's a big drive with a passenger, they'll change their dialogue so you don't have to listen to the same conversation twice. You can skip most big drives entirely by hailing a cab, which lets you jump to your destination for a modest fee. All

RAINY DAYS

GTA's weather is one of its most impressive features...



Maybe it's psychosomatic, but rain seems to make car-handling more skittish.



It's often tougher to do missions in the dark, because visibility's so low.

"THERE'S LOVE POURED INTO EVERY SECOND OF IT, AND THE RESULT'S A GAME THAT'S WORTHY OF ALL THE HYPE"

TAKING ON ALL COMERS

For the first time on consoles, *GTA* is online – with nearly a dozen brilliant ways to commit crimes against real, live people.

Mafiya Work sees you racing to do jobs for a mob boss.

Cops 'N' Crooks pits a gang of crims against the police trying to stop 'em.

Hangman's Noose sees you trying to get a mob boss clear of the Liberty City airport. "There he is, shout the sucka... Going down, my friend..."

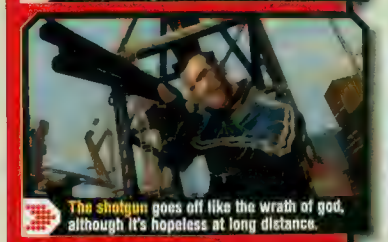
Then, of course, there's your standard deathmatch.

And team deathmatch, which usually turns out even more violent.

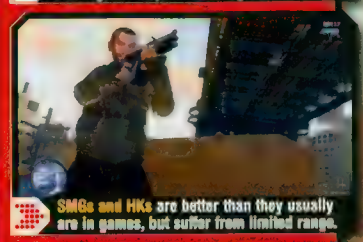
SHOOT IT OUT

In *GTA IV*, you only lose your collection of hardware if you're busted, so redoing missions means amassing more guns than ever. And you can always go to the shops...

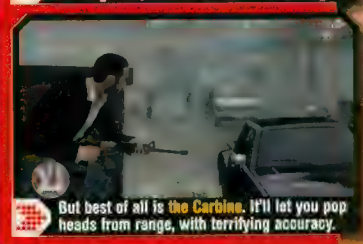
The pistol takes a few shots to put opposition down, although headshots are quicker.



The shotgun goes off like the wrath of god, although it's hopeless at long distance.



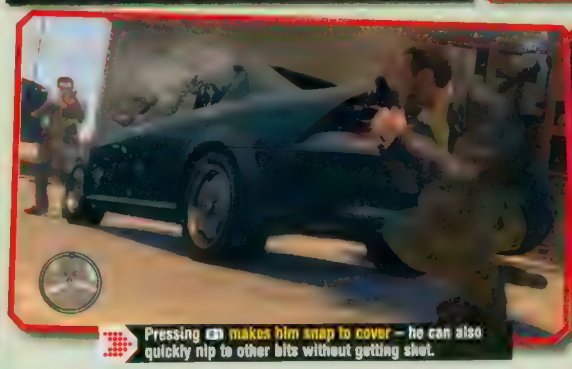
SMGs and HKs are better than they usually are in games, but suffer from limited range.



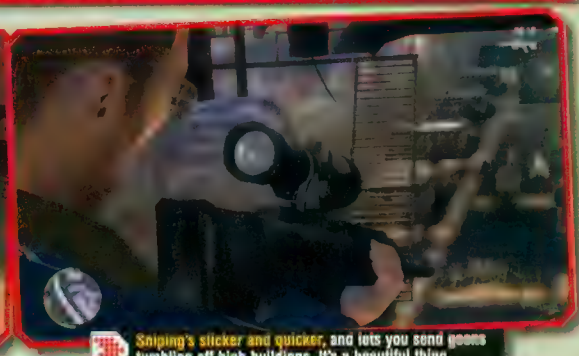
But best of all is the Carbine. It'll let you pop heads from range, with terrifying accuracy.

POP GOES THE NINE

Niko's got a shady military past, so he's better at gunfighting than any of GTA's former heroes...



Pressing ◻ makes him snap to cover – he can also quickly nip to other bits without getting shot.

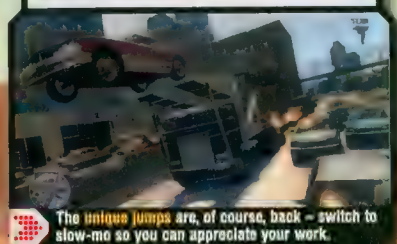


Sniping's slicker and quicker, and lets you send goons tumbling off high buildings. It's a beautiful thing.

There are plenty of Liberty City landmarks to take in, such as the Statue of Happiness.

SCREEEEEECH!

Every vehicle really does feel different in *GTA*...



The unique jumps are, of course, back – switch to slow-mo so you can appreciate your work.

If you tap Ⓐ to get on a bike, Niko will put on his helmet. But he won't if you're in a hurry, though.

OTHER FORMATS

How the same game plays on your format

Maybe a tiny bit smoother, but otherwise exactly the same – until the downloadable content comes out, anyway...

this means there's more time to concentrate on the missions themselves, which are more stuffed with set-pieces and brilliant moments than ever before. On-rails chase scenes and protect-your-friend's-energy-bar missions have been eliminated, making way for nearly 100 unique story mode missions. The only slightly cheeky thing is that you sometimes can't shoot other cars until you've gone through the chase scene you're supposed to see, but when Rockstar have gone to so much trouble rendering swerving trucks and tube train chases, you can't really complain about that.

So: is it the best game ever? That's sort of a pointless argument. But *GTA IV*'s so big, with so much to discover, so many things to do and so many ways of doing them that almost no other game can even compete. There's love poured into every second of it, and the result's a game that's easily worthy of all the hype. Welcome to Disneyland. GM

BEST BIT!

That moment when you screech around the corner, ditch your car and finally lose the cops. The relief's indescribable.

Mallory is Roman's girlfriend – she speaks fluent Noo Yawk.

JUDGEMENT

GM LOVES

- Watching characters topple over after too many vodkas
- Brucie's emails
- Ilas Rutten's TV show. 'I believe in *two* eyes for an eye!'

GM HATES

- Not being able to shoot cars during the chase scenes
- Police appearing out of nowhere
- Having to choose which characters to kill

GRAPHICS 95%
One of the prettiest next-gen games around, with a HUGE city to explore.

GAMEPLAY 96%
Every annoying thing about *GTA* is gone, replaced by shiny magic.

LIFESPAN 98%
The story lasts 25 hours – but there are multiple branches and hidden things.

OVERALL

98%

It's done everything it promised, and thrown a few extra things in on top. Simply awesome.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT

BETTER THAN: ..... Saint's Row, 80%
WORSE THAN: ..... Uncharted, 96%
WAIT FOR: ..... Er, GTA V?
BEST PRICE: ..... £37.98, amazon.co.uk

OUT: JULY ■ FORMAT: PSP ■ PRICE: £28.99 ■ DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX ■ PUBLISHER: SQUARE ENIX
CONTACT: WWW.CRISISCORE.COM ■ PLAYERS: 1

WHAT IS IT?

An RPG – the highly anticipated prequel to the best loved *Final Fantasy* game ever.

- Features cameos from FF7 characters
- Real-time battle system combining magic and combat

HOW IT PLAYS!

IN-GAME CLIP:

Explore Midgar and its environs, battle monsters and hunt down the twisted Genesis.

CRISIS CORE
FINAL FANTASY VII

GAMES MASTER GOLD AWARD

Finally a *Fantasy* worthy of the 1997 original!

As Zack rises through the ranks he becomes disillusioned with the Shinra Company.

With hairstyles and uniforms that wouldn't have looked out of place in the campest of Duran Duran videos it's little wonder that the West once found the distinctly Japanese delicacy of RPGs hard to swallow. But *Final Fantasy 7* changed all that with a combination of varied and compulsive gameplay, and plot and production values that trumped even the *Star Wars* movies in its attention to detail. Some 11 years, a couple of novels and a movie later and the game's impact has not diminished, but its subsequent PlayStation spin-offs have often left a bad taste in the mouth.

Crisis Core however is a triumph, a prequel that revels in the backstory of its source material but remains a fully fledged RPG in its own right.

The plot concerns Zack (a member of the Shinra Corporation's private army and a minor character in *FF7*) and his pursuit of his dangerous defected superior, Genesis.

CORE BLIMEY

Along the way fans will come across numerous nods to *FF7*, including cameos from major characters Sephiroth and Cloud, although the game diverts drastically from the PS1 game's format. Crucially, the developers have swapped turn-based combat for real-time battles that manage to shoehorn in materia (magic), melee attacks, dodges and item use. It's a leap that works spectacularly well, but the new Digital Mind Wave system (a series of fruit machine-like reels) will infuriate and delight fans in equal measure. The system's six reels spin furiously during combat and will randomly cause the player to unleash limit breaks and summons, or level up depending on which symbols line up. While this keeps the combat interesting, it does make character development sporadic and snatches some of the more powerful moves out of the player's control.

Whether or not this change of direction grates it can't detract from *Crisis Core*'s overall impact – it's a role-player with a huge heart and ace production. Put simply this is one of the best RPGs of recent years and it's simply the PSP's finest moment to date. GM

Other Formats

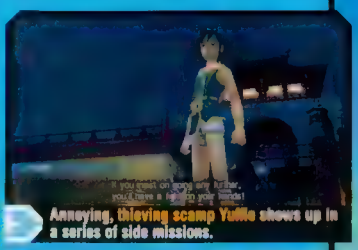
The closest alternative on your console...

DS	Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates	84%
PS2	Final Fantasy 12	81%
360	Lost Odyssey	78%

During combat you cycle through attacks, magic and items with the shoulder buttons.

REMEMBER?

player here and hero Cloud Strife drops in too, not to mention cameos from fan favourites Tifa, Aerith and twisted genius Professor Hojo.



Annoying, thieving scamp Yuffie shows up in a series of side missions.

Even familiar enemies and locations make an appearance as well. Ah, memories...

"PUT SIMPLY THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST RPGS OF RECENT YEARS AND IT'S THE PSP'S FINEST MOMENT TO DATE"

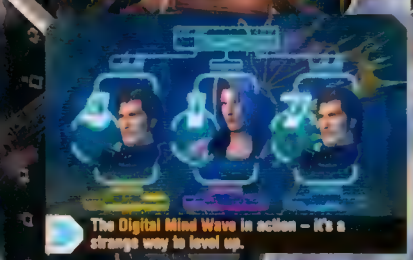
The troubled warrior shares an uneasy relationship with Zack.

Friend to Zack and fellow SOLDIER, latterly the hero of FF7.

Zack's mentor and original owner of the infamous Buster Sword.

The tragic heroine of FF7 becomes a love interest for Zack.

A defected member of SOLDIER with scientifically enhanced abilities.



The Digital Mind Wave in action – it's a strange way to level up.

Familiar summons such as Bahamut here make for tough opponents.

BEST BIT!

The hugely entertaining, well acted and often emotional story telling.

JUDGEMENT RORY

GM LOVES
- The fantastic plot and characters
- Beautiful cutscenes
- Fun combat

GM HATES
- Not having control over summons
- That the combat's too easy at times

GRAPHICS 94%
The cutscenes rival the next-gen consoles in their beauty.

GAMEPLAY 92%
The combat is fun if a little easy, but it's the story that really captures you.

LIFESPAN 86%
A relatively short story mode (around 15 hours), but lots of sidequests.

OVERALL

92%

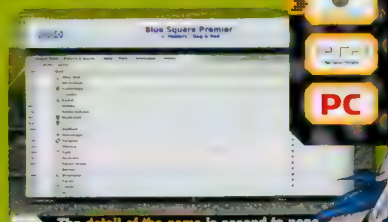
With an incredible plot and accessible gameplay this is an instant classic. Brilliant.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: FF7: Dirge of Cerberus, 84%
WORSE THAN: Final Fantasy 7, 93%
WAIT FOR: Final Fantasy 13
BEST PRICE: £24.99, amazon.co.uk

OUT: NOW • **FORMAT:** XBOX 360 • **PRICE:** £44.99 • **REV:** 51 • **PUB:** SEGA
• **ONLINE:** LEADERBOARDS AND MATCHES • **OTHER FORMATS:** PC, PSP • **WEB:** HTTP://FM08.FOOTBALLMANAGER.NET/EN/ARTICLE/100/INDEX.HTML • **PLAYERS:** 1-8

The set-up wizard system is a great help for those new to the game.



The detail of the game is second to none thousands of researchers are used.

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2008

Console yourself with this 360 version!

With all the major football leagues drawing to a close it's a strange time to release *Football Manager* on Xbox 360. But that doesn't stop it being the definitive football management game on console.

The squads and staff are bang up to date and it contains all the features and detailed play of its PC big brother, allowing you to play up to three leagues from virtually anywhere in the world. The attention to detail is astounding and it can still be a little daunting if you've not played the game before, although the new game wizards do help out considerably. Compared to the 2007 edition there are subtle changes here that really enhance the gameplay, such as having more control of your finances and the revamped international management.

LIFE'S A PITCH

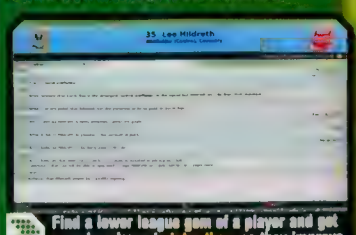
However, there's nothing to recommend buying this version over the PC one. The Xbox Live options, such as online matches, tournaments and leaderboards, are basic: it can be frustrating trying to find an opponent and then having to wait ages for them to set their team up. But the major foul play is the over-fiddly control system. Although you will eventually get used to it it's not instantaneous enough and only serves to make the time-consuming preparation of your team an even more drawn-out affair.

Without a mouse and keyboard the game moves at an infuriatingly slow pace although the processing of matches is quite quick. This is still top of the league for football management games – the best there is on console – and well worth a look, but transfer yourself to the PC version if possible.

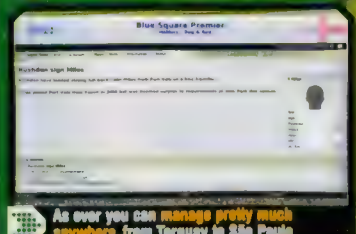
Satisfying the stringent demands of the fans. They're always the hardest ones to please.

WHO ARE YA?

The best thing about *Football Manager* is how realistic it is. The improved coach reports are much more useful now while the players' faces adorn many of their profiles.



Find a lower league gem of a player and get a senior player in to tutor them so they improve.



As ever you can manage pretty much anywhere, from Torquay to São Paulo.

JUDGEMENT — GREG

GRAPHICS 81%
Essentially you're just looking at stats but the player faces are a nice addition.

GAMEPLAY 85%
One of the most addictive games around. Poor control system hampers it.

LIFESPAN 93%
Loads of different leagues to manage in as well as Xbox Live matches to play.

OVERALL

86%

The best football management game on any console but not a patch on its PC brother.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: LMA Manager 2007, 67%
WORSE THAN: .....Football Manager 2008 (PC), 92%
WAIT FOR:.....Football Manager Live (TBC)
BEST PRICE:.....£28.98, softuk.com

Wii

Engaging an enemy in combat initiates an unexciting animated battle sequence. Not even giant flying lizards can liven this up, sadly...

Micaiah, is the leader of the Dawn Brigade and possesses strange magical powers.

FIRE EMBLEM
RADIANT DAWN

Dawn of the dead hard game...

Chances are that without the inclusion of Marth, Roy and Ike in *Smash Brothers* we'd have been far less intrigued by this strategy RPG, the tenth in the *Fire Emblem* series, but smashing Mario and co into the stratosphere in *SSBB* won't prepare newbies for the complexities (and punishing difficulty) of this title.

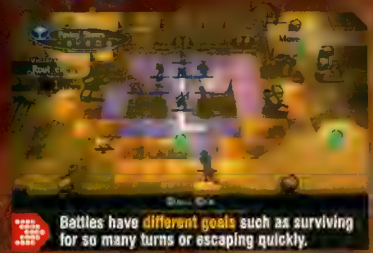
Set some years after the GameCube version (it scored 91% back in 2005) you play a disparate band of freedom fighters, the Dawn Brigade, as they battle to free their country from the clutches of a ruthless military force.

TOUGH ENOUGH

The gameplay combines RPG elements such as levelling up with classic strategy fare as you take turns to move about the top-down environments tackling foes with a variety of units. The combat works well enough, but even on the easiest setting your characters are killed maddeningly quickly and, just like in real life, once you're dead you're dead... (How unfair, eh?)

The frustrating nature of the [illegible] stronger, but it isn't sufficiently compelling to keep non-fans coming back. It also suffers from graphics that have barely improved on those of the GameCube version and no attempt whatsoever has been made to make use of the Wii-mote.

Regardless of its flaws fans of Marth and friends with a head for strategy will be positively radiant at the prospect of a new *Fire Emblem*. But for many its joys will prove elusive.



Battles have different goals such as surviving for so many turns or escaping quickly.

JUDGEMENT — RORY

GRAPHICS 60%
Cutscenes aside the presentation is pretty dismal and a bit GameCube-y.

GAMEPLAY 70%
A well designed and rewarding strategy, but hardly a rollercoaster of excitement.

LIFESPAN 74%
Like protagonist Ike it's hard as nails, but will anyone stick with it long enough?

OVERALL

68%

Fans of the series add 10%; newcomers to the genre should start elsewhere.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: Star Trek: Conquest, 60%
WORSE THAN: ..... Fire Emblem: Path of Radience, 91%
WAIT FOR: PF CC: My Life as a King (TBC)
BEST PRICE:.....£28.98, play.com

BEST BIT!

The too few beautiful cutscenes elevate the swords and sorcery plot to epic proportions.

Swords beat axes, axes beat lances and lances beat swords – got that?

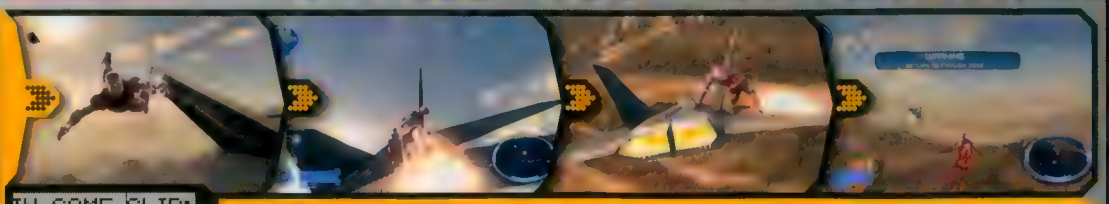
REVIEW

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XBOX 360 • PRICE: £49.99
DEVELOPER: SECRET LEVEL • PUBLISHER: SEGA • ONLINE: ACHIEVEMENTS
OTHER FORMATS: PS3, PS2, PSP, Wii, DS, PC • WEB: HTTP://IRONMANTHEGAME.MARVEL.COM • PLAYERS: 1-2

WHAT IS IT?

Become the invincible Marvel superhero in this flight-based action game – a spin-off from the film.

IN-GAME CLIP:



Tony Stark is all about peace not war, so he lets jet fighters go once he's wrestled with them for a bit.

IRON MAN

THE OFFICIAL VIDEOGAME

The perfect melding of man and machine or just a tin-can scally?

We used to think that it must be a cinch to make games about superheroes. With iconic looks, well defined powers and an established back-story it seemed that they were ready made to pluck off the Marvel/DC tree and dropped into a virtual world. But after suffering so many Superman and Fantastic shaped disappointments we've had to reappraise our beliefs. It's clear that superheroes and games don't mix.

Take Superman for example. He's the most powerful being in the universe, so how can this ever be replicated in a medium where the most enduring hero is a plumber that can jump? Then there's Spider-Man who makes most 3D cameras unworkable with his ceiling crawling and now there's Tony Stark with his suit that gives him super-human strength, supersonic speed and enough weaponry to stop the Hulk. A super suit too powerful to build a game around, it seems.

The few times this game is liberating and Iron Man feels powerful is when he's zipping through the air at full thrust. Here you have time to admire the glimmering character model and the expansive environments. The problems start to occur when Iron Man's powers are forced to adhere to videogame rules, the most troublesome being his ability to deflect bullets and batter away missiles. So the question is how do you provide a significant threat? Unfortunately the game's answer is just to ramp up the number of bullets and missiles. It's not subtle or clever, it's just a constant, headache-inducing mass assault that's designed to batter you into submission.

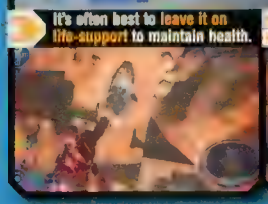
STARK READING

This peppering had to exist though as there's very little else to make Iron Man a challenge – in terms of level design it lacks wit and craft. Each mission is a sub-*Ace Combat* sweep into a nondescript valley to pick off various targets, a task that's made extremely frustrating by an auto-aim that's constantly distracted by secondary targets rather than the intended ones. Soon you forget about the freedom and the neat flight controls as the experience descends into a unnecessarily awkward mess that's akin to trying to

POWER STRUGGLE

Key to success in the missions is how you use the power of the Iron Man suit as you're able to re-route it to give extra strength to certain actions.

Use the D-pad to re-route powers – here the thrusters are given a boost.



It's often best to leave it on life-support to maintain health.

Channel it to melee attacks to make grappling tanks easy.

Boosting your weapons leaves you exposed to attacks.

BEST BIT!

There's something extremely satisfying about clutching onto a heatseeker – it's often an essential defensive manoeuvre when trying to defeat certain bosses.

THE SUIT MAKETH THE MAN

The Iron Man suit is like one skin-tight, man-shaped super weapon that enables Tony Stark to take on private armies from around the world and tear them to pieces. Whether catching and returning missiles with interest, smashing up gun emplacements or blasting things, this is how he does it...

Tanks and helicopters can be pounded to bits or grappled with and then thrown about.

There are two projectile weapons to use: long range missiles and a palm-based machine gun.

Hold down the right bumper to charge up this devastating blast. It's powerful but hard to aim.

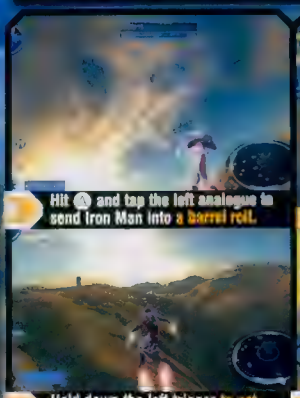
If you're sharp enough, enemy missiles can be caught and then hurled towards another target.

STARK LIFE

The presentation lacks some class partly because the cutscenes have an N64-like fogginess and also because Tony Stark comes across as a right nob – he sounds like a wiseass trapped in a bucket. Let's hope he comes across a bit better in the new film.

SUFFERABLE JET

Despite being able to land anywhere you want, most of the action takes place in the air so it's vital you get used to controlling the magical metallic man...



Hit L3 and tap the left analogue to send Iron Man into a barrel roll.

Hold down the left trigger to get altitude. Hold it half way to hover.

Hold down the left bumper and Iron Man will take to the sky like Superman. All the steering is done with the left analogue so it's simple to control.

Hold R3 to activate the jet boost to hit supersonic speeds.

Hit L1 to release chaff for some protection from missile attacks.

pee into a urinal whilst wearing roller skates and being attacked by midges.

Undermining the experience even further is Iron Man's habit of sinking into the earth when landing, grappling animations incongruous with the action and a difficulty curve that steepens sharply. Then there's the enemies that for the most part consist of instantly forgettable green tanks and choppers though at one point you're forced to fight a hovercraft in the desert that looks like something a seven year old boy would come up with.

Even though we're used to disappointment when playing superhero games it's still unpleasant to see our comic book heroes look so ordinary on our consoles, so much so that we'd rather not have them there. The only way that the developers can make cool Superhero games is if it's designed around their unique powers. Unfortunately Iron Man is an example of a really great character forced to fit into an *Ace Combat* shape resulting in a game we really don't want to play. GM

OTHER FORMATS

How the same game plays on your format...

PS2 Not as flight heavy as the 360 games but just as disappointing.

Just like the 360 version but you can unlock a PS3 exclusive costume: Ultimate Iron Man.

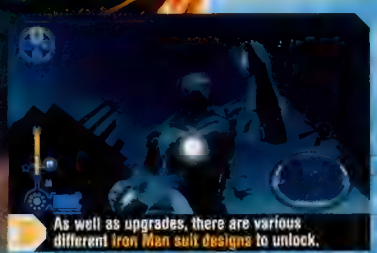
SUIT-UP

You can upgrade parts of the Iron Man suit if you have the money and right parts.

The parts and money are unlocked by completing sub-objectives in the missions.

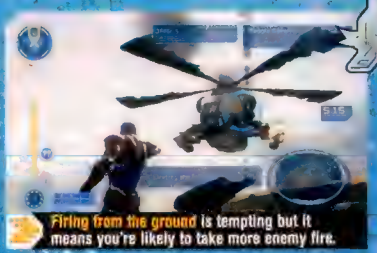
The game has a steep difficulty curve so upgrade as much and as early as you possibly can.

"AN UNNECESSARILY AWKWARD MESS AKIN TO TRYING TO PEE INTO A URINAL WHILST WEARING ROLLER SKATES"



As well as upgrades, there are various different Iron Man suit designs to unlock.

The game begins with Stark escaping from his captors in a prototype of the Iron Man suit.



Firing from the ground is tempting but it means you're likely to take more enemy fire.

IF ONLY HE HAD A HEART

As Iron Man isn't Superman, just a very smart guy flying around in a very cool looking mech, he needs plenty of data to keep tabs on the condition of his suit. This explains why the game has an extremely busy HUD (head-up display)...

You can reroute the suit's power to maximise the performance of either the life support, the weapons, the melee attack or the thrusters.
Here's Tony's heartbeat – it can only take so much battering before it has to be shocked back into action.
This displays your targets and enemies. The red icons are incoming missiles.
You have to wait until this circle is complete before launching your secondary weapon.

JUDGEMENT

DAVE

GM LOVES

+ Catching incoming missiles
+ Zipping under bridges at full throttle

GM HATES

- Repetitive missions
- The lock-on aiming
- Stark coming across as a tool

GRAPHICS

At first glance fine, but there's too many dodgy textures and sludge-like enemies.

GAMEPLAY

As frustrating as any substandard flight-based game. An irritating headache.

LIFESPAN

There are upgrades to unlock and plenty of secondary objectives to do.

OVERALL

52%

An irritating experience that unfortunately has to go down as a Marvel disappointment.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN:....Superman Returns, 46%
WORSE THAN:.....Ghost Rider, 72%
WAIT FOR:.....The Incredible Hulk (Nov)
BEST PRICE:.....£37.98, amazon.co.uk

REVIEW

OUT: NOW • FORMAT: DS • PRICE: £24.99 • DEVELOPER: TENYO
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO • PLAYERS: 1

DS

BEST BIT!

Those clever but slightly creepy "how the hell did my DS do that?" moments. It's got us completely stumped!

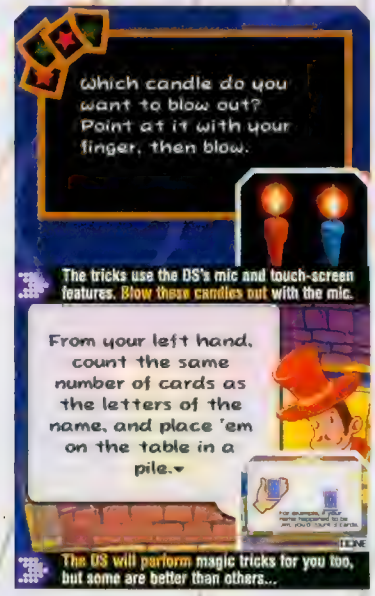
MAGIC MADE FUN™

Magic masterclass or cheap trickery?

With the huge success of Harry Potter, magic has never been so popular, and *Magic Made Fun* for the DS will teach keen amateur magicians to perform tricks of their own. It's more Paul Daniels than Rowling's boy wizard as this mixed bag of crowd pleasers relies more on sleight of hand and keenness of mind than true wizardry.

The title features minigames designed to sharpen your skills and a magic show to get you in the mood, both of which use the DS's different features to great effect. More interesting are the tricks that can be mastered and performed, all of which are clearly explained by simple and fun tutorials. All of the tricks are well presented and the best of them will leave you, or your audience, completely baffled and possibly even a bit unnerved at times.

Magic Made Fun is a genuinely surprising addition to the DS library and as training games go, it's top of the pile. But with a limited amount of performable tricks to master this is more of a taster course than a term at Hogwarts. GM


Which candle do you want to blow out? Point at it with your finger, then blow.
From your left hand, count the same number of cards as the letters of the name, and place 'em on the table in a pile.

The tricks use the DS's mic and touch-screen features. Blow these candles out with the mic.

The DS will perform magic tricks for you too, but some are better than others...

JUDGEMENT — RORY

GRAPHICS 50%
Colourful and clear, but the wow factor is reserved for the tricks.

GAMEPLAY 80%
The clear instructions and clever tricks make this very accessible.

LIFESPAN 59%
Not enough tricks to unlock, and many won't stand repeat performances.

OVERALL
70%
It does something genuinely different and demonstrates how good non-games can be.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ..... Sight Training, 65%
WORSE THAN: ..... More Brain Training, 80%
WAIT FOR: ..... Derren Brown's next tour
BEST PRICE: ..... £17.99, play.com

OUT: SPRING 2008 • FORMAT: Wii • PRICE: £39.99
DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX • PUBLISHER: SQUARE ENIX
CONTACT: SQUARE-ENIX.COM • PLAYERS: 1

Wii

Use the Wii-mote for magical attacks.
Some enemies' projectiles can be repelled with a well-timed swing.
Our hero's roguish pa lost his arm in an historic battle.
Fleurette is desperate to help her brother.
The hero of the piece – handy with a blade but a bit quiet.
Prince Anlace is the foppish son of the cursed queen.

DRAGON QUEST SWORDS
THE MASKED QUEEN AND THE TOWER OF MIRRORS

Here be dragons...

The *Dragon Quest* series has produced some fine RPGs in its time, but *Dragon Quest: Swords* isn't one of them – it isn't even a proper role-playing game. Blame the Wii-mote (ever a blessing and a curse) as turn-based battles are shelved in favour of real-time arm-waving ad nauseum.

The surprisingly complex on-rails combat sections form the backbone of the game while the filler is provided by some plodding town sections that have you talking to folk, upgrading weapons and barrelling your way through the undemanding plot. The whole package has charm in spades and the combat sections are great fun, but at heart it's an arcade game with role-playing elements.

BLOCK BUSTER

You'll block with a shield that will gradually be smashed to pieces by persistent enemy attacks. Upgrade it!

With enough cash you can buy bigger, more durable shields.

DRAG-ON AND ON

Dragon Quest: Swords doesn't claim to be a fully formed RPG sequel, but it's disappointing that it staggers so close to the greatness of games such as *Dragon Quest 8* on the PS2. All the elements are here – levelling up, magic, beautifully designed characters, great graphics and sound – but in bending the series' magic formula to fit the Wii's control system the breadth and depth of the series has been lost. Come on Square Enix, the Wii is crying out for a decent RPG... GM

Boss battles demonstrate how fun and complex the new combat system can be.

JUDGEMENT — RORY

GRAPHICS 71%
There's some great character design, but the scenery is a bit simplistic.

GAMEPLAY 58%
Combat sections are fun, but it lacks the depth to appeal to serious adventurers.

LIFESPAN 58%
At around eight hours it could be the shortest *Dragon Quest* yet.

OVERALL
68%
The usually reliable series runs aground in a Wii game that's equally diverting and dull.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ..... Agatha Christie's And Then There Were None, 65%
WORSE THAN: Zelda: Twilight Princess, 98%
WAIT FOR: ..... Crystal Chronicles Wii
BEST PRICE: ..... £29.98, amazon.co.uk

DS • OUT: NOW (US) TBC (UK) • PRICE: £29.99 • DEVELOPER: KONAMI • PUBLISHER: KONAMI
SPECIAL: REALLY FRUSTRATING • WEB: WWW.KONAMI.COM • PLAYERS: 1-2 (MINIGAMES ONLY)

LOST IN BLUE 3

Castaway or throwaway?

Oh no, not these idiots again. Seems like only yesterday we were saving the lives of two hapless morons on a desert island, yet here we are. Washed up on a beach? Check. Find cave to shelter in? Check. Build fire starter? Yep. The first two hours are a carbon copy of *Lost in Blue 2*.

Survival is the name of the game until you sort yourself with food and equipment to go further afield and discover odd *Lost*-esque events on the island. While sound enough, in a repetitive chore-filled way, the AI of your partner has always been a sticking point. Here we deal with moron version 1.5. He or she still won't drink to stay alive unless you walk them to water, but they can lighten your load by collecting wood and food. Small mercies.

This time you're landed with three of the blighters. Accumulating an army of man-children could have been a nightmare, but the arrival of each character frees up more and more time to discover secret labs and mysterious satellite dishes. For some, these narrative moments won't be apt reward for the stress of island living while for others, the art of survival is reward enough. Masochistic? Book a ticket for idiot island, now. **Matthew**

Stylus moments return: rafting, cooking, hunting and, of course, tree shaking.

NO 1 IN TEAM

Your fellow survivors are dumb but essential. James uses kung fu to destroy boulder blockages, Claire creeps into forest holes while Kumiko just tests your pronunciation.

Select your partner wisely – James is better in a tight squeeze than Claire.

But then again, Claire never invites us to meet her fists. Decisions, decisions.

JUDGEMENT

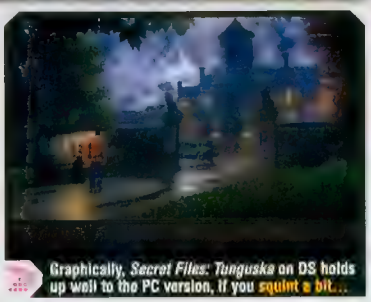
OVERALL 68%

Hasn't changed much since *2* and still needs an overhaul of the partner AI.

Wii • OUT: 25 MAY • PRICE: £29.99 • DEV: 10TACLE • PUB: KOCH MEDIA • CONTACT: WWW.SECRETFILES-GAME.COM • PLAYERS: 1

DS

Clues aren't always obvious but a tap of the button highlights points to be clicked on.


Graphically, *Secret Files: Tunguska* on DS holds up well to the PC version, if you squint a bit...

Secret Files: TUNGUSKA

Certainly not the secret (file) of success...

While condensing it from the PC onto the DS might seem impressive, the plot, presentation and gameplay of *Secret Files: Tunguska* is by-the-book point and click tradition; a feisty female lead, links with real historical events, picturesque environments and obscure puzzle-solving. However, connoisseurs of the genre will also notice a distinct absence of dry humour, sloppy dialogue and a lack of depth to the lead characters' personalities.

That said, this DS version looks crisp and the *Da Vinci Code*-style storyline of a girl investigating the disappearance of her father who was studying Tunguska (a meteorite explosion in Russia at the turn of the 20th century) begs to be followed.

Western point and click adventures aren't in huge supply on the DS so we certainly wouldn't want to put you off this. It's not constant action and excitement, but it is a solid, focussed and unashamedly old-fashioned adventure. **Shaun**

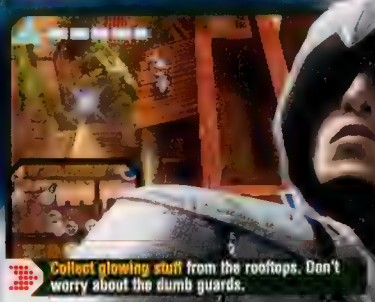
Finding out there is an online walkthrough when you get really stuck.

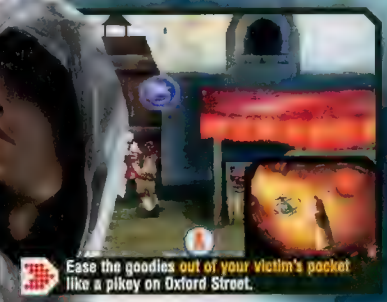
JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 72%

It can't match the point and click greats, but it's a welcome addition to DS.

DS • OUT: NOW • PRICE: £29.99 • DEV: UBISOFT • PUB: UBISOFT • WEB: HTTP://ASSASSINSCREED.UK.UBI.COM/EXPERIENCE • PLAYERS: 1


Collect glowing stuff from the rooftops. Don't worry about the dumb guards.


Ease the goodies out of your victim's pocket like a pikey on Oxford Street.

ASSASSIN'S CREED

ALTAÏR'S CHRONICLES

The shifty bloke in a white-hooded dress is now on DS!

With all those loose ends left dangling at the conclusion of *Assassin's Creed*, you'd think a DS side-quest would be a great opportunity to flesh out the plot, explore the backgrounds of the characters and drop hints about the next proper instalment in the series. They wouldn't be able to reproduce the graphics and thrills of the main game on a handheld, but they could do everything else, right?

Wrong. Instead they've gone down the sideways-scrolling route, turning Altaïr's investigations into tedious minigames and the rooftop-hopping action into a painfully average platform game. What a waste!

The graphics are detailed but jerky in motion, and the enemies have the attention span and intelligence of a goldfish. The controls are unresponsive. The more we play it, the poorer it seems. This really doesn't deserve the *Assassin's Creed* name. **Martin**

It looks reasonably like the real thing, at least until it starts moving.

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 45%

The kind of thing you'd regret downloading to your mobile. But more expensive.

REVIEW

OUT: 11 APRIL ■ **FORMAT:** Wii ■ **PRICE:** £19.99
DEVELOPER: GRAND PRIX/CAVIA ■ **PUBLISHER:** UBISOFT
WEB: VICTORIOUSBOXERSREVOLUTION.COM ■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2

Wii

The split-screen two player mode is fun for a while if you have a competitive nature. "Seconds out, round one... FIGHT!"

VICTORIOUS BOXERS CHALLENGE

Let's take this outside...

Ever since *Wii Sports* showed us just what Nintendo's magical waggle stick can do we've been hoping for games that expand on its promise. Sad to say, *Victorious Boxing* isn't that game.

Based on the anime *Fighting Spirit*, it follows the tale of underdog boxer Ippo's rise to the top of his game, but story wise it's no *Raging Bull*. Worst of all, how well you perform in the ring isn't reflected in your character's progress – if the plot says Ippo loses, you lose regardless of how well you fight.

BOX CLEVER

Training mode is the best way to get to grips with the awkward controls: persevere and you'll enjoy the main game a lot more, wade in unprepared and you'll be eating canvas.

Slightly boring but worth it in the long run – Take that, you sand filled brute!

In an attempt to dodge, drawing lines on the screen is too darn fiddly, and using the GameCube controller defeats the object of a Wii boxing game.

Crappy as it feels, there's still some fun to be had in multi-player, but with the standard set so high by a game that is given away with the Wii (along with four other sports titles) it's hard to recommend this.

GM

PUNCH DRUNK

All this would be forgiven however if the boxing felt right. It doesn't. There are several control schemes here, none of which work particularly well. Swinging the Wii-mote in time with Ippo easily interpreted as an attempt to dodge, drawing lines on the screen is too darn fiddly, and using the GameCube controller defeats the object of a Wii boxing game.

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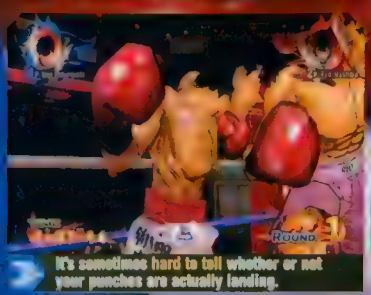


It's sometimes hard to tell whether or not your punches are actually landing.

The between-rounds pep talks are a nice touch, with great attention to detail.

JUDGEMENT

GRAPHICS 58%
Distinctive and faithful to the anime, but far from pretty.

GAMEPLAY 50%
The controls just aren't slick enough making for a frustrating experience.

LIFESPAN 32%
Story mode isn't compelling enough, and the multi-player is merely good.

OVERALL

61%

A not very convincing attempt to snatch the reigning champion *Wii Boxing's* crown.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ...Godzilla Unleashed, 45%
WORSE THAN: ...Wii Sports, 80%
WAIT FOR: ...Facebreaker
BEST PRICE: ...£18.99, amazon.co.uk

■ **OUT:** NOW ■ **FORMAT:** XBOX 360 ■ **PRICE:** £44.99
■ **DEVELOPER:** MIDWAY ■ **PUBLISHER:** MIDWAY ■ **OTHER FORMATS:** PS3
■ **CONTACT:** WWW.NBABALLERS.COM ■ **PLAYERS:** 1-4

PS3

It's easy to get the ball although five 'fouls' result in a free shot for your opponent.

It don't mean a thing if you 'aint got that bling – you smug, overpaid git.

NBA Ballers CHOSEN ONE

Jumping through hoops to become *the* b-ball celeb!

Midway have been creating larger-than-life basketball games since there was enough processing power to give the famous players giant heads. And, since the glory days of *NBA Jam*, no basketballer worth their size 17s can consider themselves superstars until they've experienced videogame fame. It's just a shame with *NBA Ballers: Chosen One* that the seems to have shifted from players saying, "please put me in your NBA game" to Midway asking, "can we please put you in our game? We'll make you look amazing and everything".

Such is the current culture of celebrity that *NBA Ballers: Chosen Ones* has evolved from arcade b-balling into a cross between *MTV Cribs*, *America's Next Top Model* and cheesy sports entertainment designed entirely to massage the egos of sports personalities. Essentially, this takes a form like one of the aforementioned TV shows, where your player has to work his way up in 'episodes' through the ranks of players (in one-on-one, two-on-two or three way free-for-all), competing across increasingly opulent courts to eventually become the blinged up 'Chosen One'.

Using your 'Juice' to hurtle through the air to execute an incredible dunk.

As with all sports games that use 'playground rules', the gameplay is swift but a little scrappy and disjointed when the special moves are initiated. The fact that your character gains more moves and attribute boosts makes the game more interesting (and complex) as you progress but we can't help think that this was a great opportunity to be silly and have some fun rather than try and prove how wealthy and 'gangsta chic' basketball players think they are.

GM

SKILLZ

While all the traditional basketball moves are in place, using your 'Juice' meter allows you to trigger special moves, ranging from elaborate jukes to a Quick Time button-pressing stunts.

The 'Turn It Up' moves allow you to make a fool of your opponent with your crazy skills.

Pull off difficult moves for more points and to enhance your stats temporarily.

JUDGEMENT

GRAPHICS
Waxy skin and cold dead eyes mix it with shiny gangsta bling.

GAMEPLAY
A lack of rules makes the gameplay disorderly but pulling off tricks satisfies.

LIFESPAN
Online face-offs promise intense fun if taking on someone with similar skills.

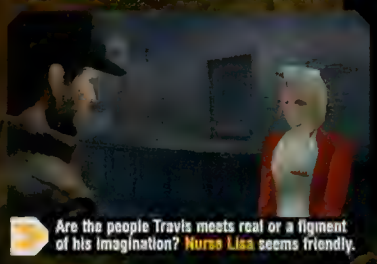
OVERALL

71%

Some of the fun of old wacky b-ball games has been replaced by what's perceived as cool...

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ...NBA 2K6, 64%
WORSE THAN: ...NBA Street V3, 88%
WAIT FOR: ...Sports Island
BEST PRICE: ...£24.88, amazon.co.uk

OUT: MAY **FORMAT:** PS2 **PRICE:** TBC **DEVELOPER:** MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS **PUBLISHER:** KONAMI **OTHER FORMATS:** PSP
CONTACT: KONAMI-DATA.COM/OFFICIALSITES/SILENTHILLORIGINS **PLAYERS:** 1



Are the people Travis meets real or a figment of his imagination? Nurse Lisa seems friendly.

The street names are often named after horror authors; we spotted Dean Koontz street.

SILENT HILL ORIGINS

Welcome back to gaming's scariest town...

In reality *Silent Hill* is probably the last place on Earth we'd want to visit – we'd sooner spend a bank holiday in Baghdad. But atmosphere wise it trumps even *Resi*'s Racoon City on the scare-o-meter. This latest game in the series (a port of the recent PSP title) reveals how it all began in a plot involving a troubled trucker, a mysterious fire and loopy locals with a terrible secret.

As ever it's a creepy adventure with eerie locations, frequent moments of extreme tension and some of the most horrific monsters imaginable. The game doesn't stray far from the series' established formula, but landmarks such as the hospital and asylum have rarely felt more authentic. Better still, the puzzles (so often hit and miss) are actually rather good multi-part stumpers combining collecting stuff, fiddling with switches and the crossing of dimensions.

SILENT SCREAM

But *Origin*'s is far from perfect. The major stumbling block is, as ever, the clumsy camera and combat. Travis (that's you) will often enter rooms with the camera facing away from the action which leaves you open to attack from the more unpleasant townsfolk. Even with added quick-time events and a broader range of weapons the combat is limited and leaden, and it only gets worse when there's more than one freak to bludgeon. Personally if we were beset by the horrors of Silent Hill we'd be swinging that 2x4 like a hoodie high on Red Bull, but trucking Travis appears to prefer a more laid back approach.

Origins proves that Silent Hill is still worth a visit, but it does little to advance the series by re-treading on old ground. We can't help but wish that Konami would give it an overhaul to rival that of *Resident Evil 4*.

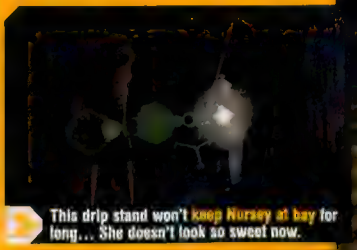
GM

BEST BIT!

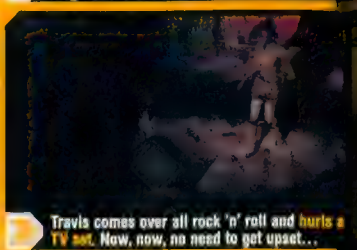
Using mirrors to slip between the 'normal' world and the nightmarish 'other world'.

SMASH THEM!

Firearms are in short supply so Travis will need to use anything that comes to hand to fight his way out. Weapons aren't particularly durable either so keep a look out for blunt objects.



This drip stand won't keep Nursey at bay for long... She doesn't look so sweet now.



Travis comes over all rock 'n' roll and hurls a TV set. Now, now, no need to get upset...

JUDGEMENT

RORY

GRAPHICS
The grainy filter effects hide jagged edges but make it hard to see.

GAMEPLAY
Exploring and solving puzzles is great, but the combat feels sluggish.

LIFESPAN
Unlockable content and alternate endings bulk out the short main game.

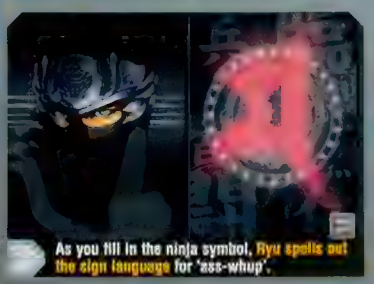
OVERALL

75%

An unnerving experience certainly, but the same old problems persist.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:..... Silent Hill 4, 72%
WORSE THAN:..... Silent Hill 2, 88%
WAIT FOR:..... Silent Hill 5, TBC
BEST PRICE:..... £29.99, amazon.com

OUT: NOW (US) TBC (UK) **FORMAT:** DS **PRICE:** £29.99 **DEV:** TEAM NINJA
PUB: TECMO **ONLINE:** YES (SCOREBOARD) **SPECIAL:** HELD BOOK STYLE
WEB: WWW.NINJAGAIDENGAME.COM **PLAYERS:** 1



As you fill in the ninja symbol, Ryu spells out the sign language for 'ass-whup'.

Goodness, gracious, great balls of ninpo magic.

NINJA GAIDEN DRAGON SWORD

Oh man, we wouldn't want to be those words blocking his path.

Not your *Gaiden*-variety ninja...

Forget brain training, this trains you in braining. Who'd have thought Team Ninja could cram such a comprehensive selection of stabbing, poking, chopping and slicing onto one DS cart? Like *Phantom Hourglass*, our hero Ryu Hayabusa is entirely stylus controlled. Slash the screen and he follows suit, draw upwards and he somersaults like the deadliest gymnast ever seen.

Scribble the stylus for an awesome ninja lightshow. Also: stabbings aplenty.

As a technical showcase it's outstanding. Held like a book you have a massive playing field on the now-vertical touch-screen, and with pre-rendered backgrounds, the technically weak DS can focus on pumping out crackling sword attacks at a never-faltering framerate. So quick and responsive is Ryu's 3D model that you almost feel sorry for the demonic hoards, they just can't keep up with the guy.

Factor in overpowered ninja magic – a minigame has you tracing mystical symbols to activate powers – and a focus on short little levels crafted for portable play and you have a game of little challenge. This'll be a major blow to fans of the series. Ever since he reappeared on the Xbox after a hiatus from his NES days, Ryu has been one tough mother. Ninjas preaching calm and grace; the gamers that play as them swearing until sore in the throat.

While we enjoy being able to complete a *Gaiden* adventure for once, the hardcore spirit has been diluted for the DS. You'll prod your way to victory in an easy six hours, which then unlocks a much harder difficulty, but we wish it had been there from the start. Maybe Team Ninja were worried people would struggle with their radical controls. They had no need to; this is some of the best stylus work on DS.

GM

BEST BIT!

Facing off against bosses. Giant, flaming beasties just crying out for a prodding.

Chain together moves and you can juggle the baddies in midair. Woah!

JUDGEMENT

MAT

GRAPHICS
Sly use of static backgrounds allows for the best character work on DS.

GAMEPLAY
While immensely satisfying to play, it does feel like a pre-school *Gaiden* entry.

LIFESPAN
You'll want to play the harder mode, but even then it's not a long game.

OVERALL

81%

Rivals *Zelda* as a technical achievement, but the hardcore credentials have taken a knock.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:..... Legend of the Dragon, N/A
WORSE THAN:..... Phantom Hourglass, 84%
WAIT FOR:..... Kung Fu Panda
BEST PRICE:..... £22.98, play-asia.com

REVIEWS ROUND-UP

Wii • OUT: NOW • PRICE: £39.99 • DEV: ARC SYSTEM WORKS • PUB: 505 GAMES • CONTACT: WWW.505GAMES.CO.UK • PLAYERS: 1-2

GUILTY GEAR XX CORE

Former boss character Dizzy is assisted in battle by two powerful spirits.

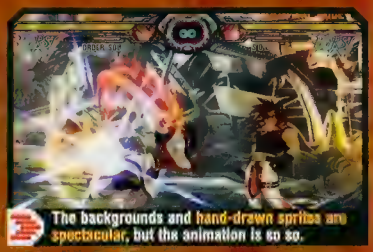
A guilty pleasure for fight fans...

In this golden age of violent sandbox wounds and life-consuming multiplayer online RPGs the 2D fighter is a reassuringly old-fashioned genre recalling distant memories of sticky flavored arcades and [illegible] inducing, drum-tight gameplay. But the marriage of the brilliant *Guilty Gear XX Core* with the Wii's hi-tech controls is enough to make us snap our rose-tinted spectacles in half...

This instalment of the long running series features 28 well-balanced characters and new features such as air rushes and force breaks, and its use of three combat systems discourages button mashing in favour of measured offensive and defensive manoeuvres that can be honed in the Vs and Practice modes. It's fast paced enough to appeal to newcomers to the series, but difficult enough to please hardened veterans.

It's a great game containing the wildest roster of characters imaginable and a fighting system that recalls the mighty *Street Fighter 2* in its complexity and brilliance – but for one problem; mapping the complex controls to the D-pad and throwing in motion-sensing controls makes playing with any degree of precision impossible.

But should you have the money to invest in a Classic Controller you'll experience one of the most intense fighters available. At least until *Street Fighter 4* is released anyway... **Rory**



The backgrounds and hand-drawn sprites are spectacular, but the animation is so so.

From sky-faring pirates to suave vampires – it's completely insane (but in a good way).

BEST BIT!

The wonderfully weird characters and their bizarre and devastating attacks.

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 80%

A meaty and satisfyingly weird addition to the 2D fighting genre.

PS2 • OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £29.99 • DEVELOPER: MEDIA VISION • PUBLISHER: 505 GAMES • PLAYERS: 1

WILD ARMS 5

Dean fulfils his dream of being a Golem hunter during Wild Arms 5.

The character design is anime-OK; not mind blowing.

Quick on the draw but only rarely hits the target...

It's easy to see why the *Wild Arms* series has survived for over 10 years. With its Wild West vibe and intriguing Hex combat system it mixes role-playing conventions with touches of innovation making it far more than just a typical RPG series.

This latest addition follows the story of the unremarkably named Dean and his friend Rebecca as they travel from their village to discover the truth behind the mysterious appearance of a young girl. Along the way, they come of age, help people and learn about life in standard RPG fashion.

One of the strengths of *Wild Arms* is the Hex combat system that allows for a movement on a grid during combat giving it a chess-like feel rather than just turned-based repetition.

A SHORT REACH

Unfortunately this is undermined by a disappointingly accommodating enemy AI that takes the edge off the experience. And it's this lack of intensity that prevents *Wild Arms 5* fulfilling it's potential. With the option to skip random battles in dungeons, a hint system continually prompting you and puzzles that take little thought it seems the game is intended for those new to the series who need their hand held, rather than those who want to be continually challenged and tested.

This is not to say that the game isn't enjoyable as there's a rich and entertaining adventure here. But there's also a feeling that *Wild Arms 5* is pulling its punches. **Dave**

BEST BIT!

The action-based puzzles that add some immediacy and fast fun to the RPG set-up.

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 72%

Enjoyable, but its newcomer emphasis stops it being essential.

XBLA • OUT: NOW • PRICE: 800 MS POINTS • DEVELOPER: TREASURE G.REV • PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT • ONLINE: LEADERBOARDS, LIVE CO-OP • PLAYERS: 1-2

IKARUGA

Still keeping it real... real hard!

BEST BIT!

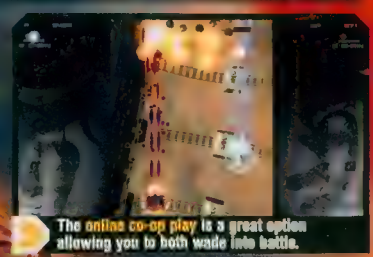
The extra dimension the gameplay gains with your ship being able to switch colour and absorb enemy fire is ace.

Ikaruga is hardcore. It's a game that's as unforgiving as an elephant, as welcoming as Iraq and as easy to complete as *War and Peace*. But that hasn't stopped it generating a significant following and often being touted as the best 2D shooter around.

It first appeared on the Dreamcast and now finds itself as a downloadable from Xbox Live. The popping technicolour pyrotechnics simply dazzle on the 360 and the online co-op play and leaderboards are great additions. Its 2D scrolling action is simple, but you'll be blown away by the size of the bosses and the amount of on-screen activity as the enemy bullets flying at you are torrential.

SWEAR-'EM-UP

If you haven't played *Ikaruga* before, you'll also be blown away as to how difficult it is. Even on easy it's brutal with the second and third levels only accessible if your reflexes and reactions gradually sharpen through endless repetition.



The online co-op play is a great option allowing you to both wade into battle.

Subsequently there will be many that might find this game far too intense, but if you're ready for an extreme gaming challenge that will test your skills to the very limit then *Ikaruga* won't disappoint you. **Dave**

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 80%

As tough and great as it ever. This suits the Xbox Live Arcade perfectly.

GET FREE STUFF

We love a good bargain on *GM*. So every issue we'll be telling you how to get cool stuff and save money. Remember, the more money you save, the more games you can get with it!

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1.This offer expires at midnight on 31 Dec 2008 2. To register for your free trial, a valid credit or debit card is required. 3. Your free trial expires 30 days after registration. 4. You will NOT be charged during the free trial unless you change your subscription package. 5. Depending on the package you choose, you may have either 1, 2 or 3 discs out at any one time. 6. You can cancel your subscription at any time. 7. Existing subscribers or those who have previously enjoyed a free trial with any LOVEFILM-powered site are not eligible. 8. At the end of your free trial, you will automatically become a paying member unless you cancel your subscription and return any of our discs in your possession BEFORE the end of your free trial. 9. To receive your free £10 e-voucher, you must validly register for the free trial, put at least ten discs in your rental list and we must have dispatched your first disc to you. 10. Within 30 days from dispatch of your first disc, LOVEFILM will email your free £10 e-voucher to you at the email address on your account as at the date of dispatch. 11. This offer may not be redeemed in conjunction with any other offer and is limited to one per household. 12. Terms and conditions apply. Visit www.lovefilm.com for further details.

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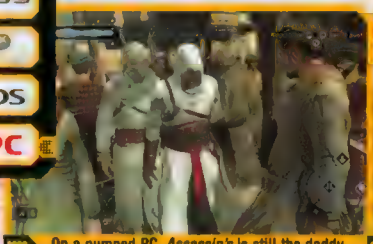
REVIEW

■ OUT: NOW ■ FORMAT: PC ■ PRICE: £34.99 ■ DEV: UBISOFT MONTREAL
■ PUB: UBISOFT ■ OTHER FORMATS: XBOX 360, PS3, DS, MOBILE
■ WEB: ASSASSINSCREED.COM ■ PLAYERS: 1

PS3 PC DS PC



On a pumped PC, *Assassin's* is still the daddy on the graphics front...

...plus it's got the most arresting combat this side of the Holy Land.

ASSASSIN'S CREED

Director's Cut Edition

Keep on (free) running as Altaïr gets new orders...

While PC parkour fans may have been forced to sit and drum their fingers for a tortuous three months while their console-owning pals whirled around the rooftops of Acre, Jerusalem and Damascus, Altaïr is finally ready to make his PC bow in this – the definitive Director's Cut of *Assassin's Creed*...

So what's new? Well, apart from enhanced AI and even more luscious souped-up medieval visuals (though bear in mind you'll need a monster dual or quad-core PC to run the game with the maximum eye candy), Ubisoft have ramped up the mission variety with four new outings for Altaïr.

The first involves escorting a fellow *Creed* pal to a safe haven, the second involves kicking merchant botty, the third involves Altaïr massacring a band of rooftop archers and the fourth is a timed point-to-point rooftop race. Although they certainly add welcome diversity compared to the console versions that – let's be honest here – charmed us primarily owing to their combination of incredi-graphics and Altaïr's amazing feats of agility rather than memorable gameplay, none will exactly thrill the pants off of you.

Controls-wise, *Assassin's* blatant console roots also regularly rear their ugly head. Although this certainly isn't a poor port in any sense, we'd still really recommend a gamepad (preferably a 360 one) else you end up tearing your hair out with the bizarre default keyboard/mouse combo.

If you're one of the many gamers who, after all the Ubi hype, ended up distinctly disenchanted with *Assassin's* wafer-thin gameplay, then there's little new to change your mind here. At heart, this epic remains perhaps the most beautiful – albeit fatally flawed – videogame ever conceived and whether you end up loving or hating it all will strictly depend upon personal preference. Still, with the PC bereft of any even half-decent platformers, it's unique enough to warrant snapping up.

GM

TASK TROUBLE

While we're all in favour of fleshing out *Assassin's* meagre mission repertoire, the four new excursions won't exactly send your pulse racing. Still, better than just eavesdropping.

Ruin livelihoods! Merchant stand destruction involves mashing up some timber.

At least the rooftop races allow you to test your honed parkour skills...

JUDGEMENT

ROB

GRAPHICS 90%
Crysis gets a worthy rival, but you'll need a mega PC to run it.

GAMEPLAY 70%
You'll either love it or hate it. The ultimate marmite videogame.

LIFESPAN 80%
Three sprawling cities and loads of missions, but it's so repetitive...

OVERALL

It's the ultimate *Assassin's* package and that means we love it, but thousands won't.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:..... Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones, 78%
WORSE THAN:..... Nothing
WAIT FOR:..... Age of Conan (May)
BEST PRICE:..... £24.99, game.co.uk

■ OUT: NOW ■ FORMAT: XBOX 360 ■ PRICE: £44.99 ■ DEV: PETROGLYPH
■ PUB: SEGA ■ ONLINE: FOUR-PLAYER VERSUS ■ OTHER FORMATS: PC
■ WEB: WWW.SEGA.COM/GAMESITE/UNIVERSEATWAR ■ PLAYERS: 1-4

PC

There's little in life so satisfying as rolling up at a poorly defended base with 300 feet of near-unstoppable walking fortress. "Ha ha ha haaa..."

UNIVERSE AT WAR

EARTH ASSAULT

Put your thinking caps on...

On any other day of the week, the Hierarchy would have reduced the Earth to a wee puff of smoke within an hour or two, but it's a Sunday, they're a little partied out, and they've taken their time. Their mistake – the Novus are here to save Earth, the Masari are here to save themselves and humanity had better get out of the way now that Earth is an intergalactic battlefield.

Even on PC, *Universe at War* felt a little different, with the three factions playing unlike anything ever seen in a strategy game. Some travel by wire, some shift between dark and light forms, and others stomp around in mechs the size of buildings while mutilating cows for giggles.

On 360, *Universe*'s clever ideas feel even more special, but just when you were getting ready to like the silly robots and zombie cows, it punches you twice, gives you two dead legs and makes you run a marathon.

Its one-two punch is a combo of clunky controls and the game's PC heritage. *Universe* takes the best crack at pad-based real-time strategy controls yet, but they're still not quite immediate enough. At heart this is still a PC game: it has too much to do and manage for most gamers to handle on a controller. You'll love the journey and you'll want to run faster, but you'll never quite make your legs work like they should.

Designing a strategy game for a pad means redesigning it from the ground up, and *Universe* proves it. The best pad controls ever still aren't good enough for a PC RTS, and it's a problem we'll be stuck with so long as they keep serving up Port.

Michael GM

FLY BY WIRE

Getting about the map in most strategy games is a case of clicking a bunch of soldiers and watching them march miles to their destination. We can do better than that...

The android Nirvex can travel anywhere through pylons as pure data.

The Hierarchy stomp around in gigantic walkers, sucking up trees, houses and cows.

JUDGEMENT

MICHAEL

GRAPHICS 90%
Looks great until the screen floods with troopers and everything slows down.

GAMEPLAY 80%
An inventive console control scheme that's not quite up to the job alas.

LIFESPAN 90%
The campaign is huge and the online mode theoretically limitless.

OVERALL

74%

This is one of the better RTSs on console at the moment. But there are more on the way...

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:..... Nothing
WORSE THAN:..... Command & Conquer 3, 81%
WAIT FOR:..... Tom Clancy's EndWar
BEST PRICE:..... £32.99, amazon.co.uk

Q. What do you notice about these holiday snaps?

A. There's not a parent in sight!

The Pueblo Ingles teen program (also known as the teen camp with a cultural twist) is the best way to spend a week in Spain without your mum lurking around the corner. If you are a native English speaker between 13 and 18 and you are sociable and chatty, you could be just what we are looking for! If you think you could help a group of Spanish teens learn more about our language, Pueblo Ingles invite you to stay in a beautiful rural resort (with all meals included) for free!!! You will take part in all sorts of activities in which you'll discover talents you never thought you had. This is a great opportunity to meet Spaniards and other people from around the English speaking world.

And did we mention it was free? www.puebloingles.com

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REVIEWS ROUND-UP

OUT: NOW • PRICE: £19.99 • DEV: BETHESDA • PUB: BETHESDA
URL: STARTREK.BETHSOFT.COM • PLAYERS: 1

STAR TREK: CONQUEST

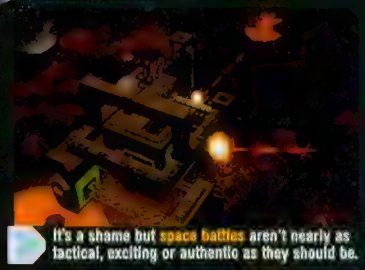
Boldly going nowhere fast...

After years of persecution *Star Trek* fans will soon be able to hold their pointy-eared heads up high with the release of *Lost* creator JJ Abrams' prequel movie in 2009. Ahead of this, fans may wish to console themselves with *Star Trek Conquest* on the Wii, but we wouldn't recommend it.

Players can choose from an impressive array of races including the Federation, the Klingons and the Dominion, before attempting to take control of this or that quadrant through an ambitious mix of strategy and action. On paper it sounds like a worthy attempt to bring the sprawling saga to the Wii, but in reality this is depressingly underwhelming. The strategic elements work quite well as you build fleets and conquer outposts across a boardgame-like grid, but both combat modes are confusing and hard to control. In fact, it's that bad we'd advise simply pressing the '–' (minus) button to bypass confrontations by allowing the game to decide the outcome automatically.

Worst of all though is the criminal waste of the licence. Love it or hate it *Star Trek* has a wealth of source material to draw on. Here we're lumbered with small static images of the insignificant characters and fiddly little spaceships. Poor.

Rory GM



It's a shame but space battles aren't nearly as tactical, exciting or authentic as they should be.

A Federation fleet descends on a lone Ferengi – Picard would definitely not approve.

Set during the *Next Generation*-era the game features lots of iconic enemies and vessels.

WORST BIT!

The strategic and real time combat is just plain fiddly and confusing

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 60%

A passable strategy game, but not even fans will find much to love.

OUT: NOW • PRICE: £19.99 • DEV: MUD DUCK • PUB: KOCH MEDIA
URL: WWW.MUDDUCKGAMES.COM • PLAYERS: 1-4

WORST BIT! Hearing your bowling repeating the same banter line of dialogue over and over again...

AMF BOWLING PINBUSTERS!

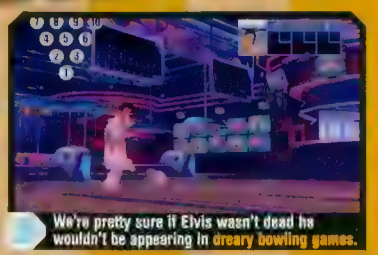
This belongs in the gutter...

The success of *Wii Sports* was always likely to spawn imitators but after numerous frames and tournaments with *AMF Bowling Pinbusters* we're still left scratching our heads as to why this exists. It is, as a whole, considerably worse than what is one fifth of *Wii Sports* – in look, execution and enjoyment.

You'd think that having a game dedicated to the sport of ten-pin bowling would give plenty of opportunity for a decent career mode, unlockable lanes and characters. At the very least, scores of minigames. No such luck here...

That you're treated to the same 'Game Over' screen at the end of a tournament whether you win or lose is evidence enough that this is an epic failure. Start adding the appalling ball physics, offensively generic and stereotypical characters (who come with about three utterly infuriating lines of dialogue), no option for left-handed players and absolutely no content to encourage long-term play and you're left with an utterly pointless, lazy excuse for a game.

Shaun GM



We're pretty sure if Elvis wasn't dead he wouldn't be appearing in dreary bowling games.

The only nice thing we can say about *AMF Bowling* is that the pins have good physics.

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 38%

Essentially, you're paying £20 for something far inferior to *Wii Sports*.

OUT: NOW • PRICE: £29.99 • DEVELOPER: NIPPON ICHI • PUBLISHER: XSEED
URL: WWW.THESOULNOMAD.COM • PLAYERS: 1

SOUL NOMAD

Quirky, complicated and a bit scruffy around the edges...

If you have the patience to allow a game time to develop at its own pace rather than blow you away in the first few levels then *Soul Nomad* is a game aimed directly at you. It takes someone special to sit through a fist-chewingly boring full-motion video and a first 20 minutes almost indistinguishable from any RPG from the last 20 years.

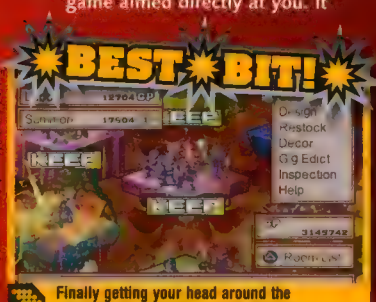
Once given a chance though you'll find a deceptively complex RPG with a quirky storyline. It's based on a young warrior who allows himself to be possessed by an ancient enemy, Gig the Master of Death, to destroy a greater evil threatening the world of Prodesto. It gives the adventure a twisted 'buddy-cop' dynamic as our hero sparks off a spirit not known for his manners.

The only thing that might stop those who like their RPGs old-school in presentation and tone is the complexity of the combat. This is a game that has you summoning fighters from other dimensions and trying to harness the power of your inner god while understanding the subtleties of the grid-based combat system.

Soul Nomad will mainly appeal to those hardcore RPG gamers who appreciate levelling up more than the presentation as this really lacks polish and visual flair. Those who prefer an adventure that makes all the effort to entertain, however, should look for something more welcoming.

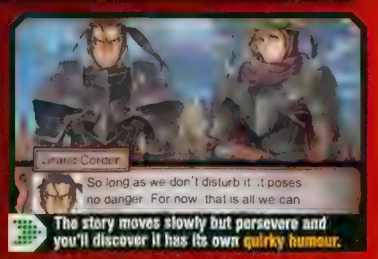
Dave GM

BEST BIT!



Finally getting your head around the infuriatingly complex combat system.

The presentation is really basic. It looks more like a handheld RPG than a console one.



The story moves slowly but persevere and you'll discover it has its own quirky humour.

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 60%

What it lacks in terms of presentation it makes up in detail. RPG fans only.

Vote for immortality!

26th ANNUAL GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS

Voting opens 19th May
Go to www.goldenjoystick.com

The **Golden Joystick Awards** are back and bigger than ever. It's simple: only the games with the most votes will make it onto the illustrious shortlist, so vote now to make sure your favourite is in there. Voting begins Monday 19th May at **www.goldenjoystick.com**

gamesradar.com bliss Nuts The Sun www.thesun.co.uk 1Xtra BBC DIGITAL RADIO talent Future MEDIA WITH PASSION

OUT: NOW • PRICE: £29.99 • DEVELOPER: SONY
PUBLISHER: SONY • PLAYERS: 1-2

SINGSTAR SUMMER PARTY

Sony invite you to a night of cheese and soul!

Sony are marketing this latest addition to the *SingStar* cannon as being 'perfect for those hot summer nights' but we're not so certain. Of course no-one can argue with Wham's *Club Tropicana* or *Mambo No 5* when it comes to capturing the cheap giddiness of the summer pop hit, but Adele's *Chasing Pavements*? Or *Hey There Delia*? That's not a summer party, that's an introspective night in with a scented candle. But this failure to follow through with the whole 'Summer' theme results in a *SingStar* line up that has real variety, with a tune to tempt anyone into stepping up to the mic.

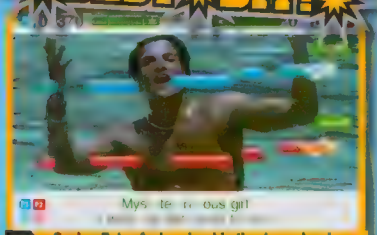
For the cool kids, there's *Bang Bang You're Dead*, for the Dad's there's Bowie, Mum's have a wide selection of female songstresses to emulate and for the sensitive younger brother there's a cracking Diana Ross track. It really is a belting selection to satisfy with it's quantity and quality.

As ever the presentation is fantastic and while there's little innovation to push the series forward, as long as they keep putting playlists like this together, we won't care a jot. **Dave** GM

TRACK LIST

ADELE - Chasing Pavements
AMY WINEHOUSE - Tears Dry On Their Own
BLONDIE - The Tide Is High
BLUR - Girls And Boys
BOOTY LUV - Shine
CHESNEY HAWKES - The One And Only
DAVID BOWIE - Let's Dance
DIANA ROSS - I'm Coming Out
DIRTY PRETTY THINGS - Bang Bang You're Dead
DODGY - Good Enough
ELTON JOHN - I'm Still Standing
FIVE STAR - System Addict
GIRLS ALOUD - Call The Shots
KAISER CHIEFS - I Predict A Riot
KLAXONS - It's Not Over Yet
KT TUNSTALL - Suddenly I See
LOU BEGA - Mambo No 5 (A Little Bit Of...)
MADNESS - House Of Fun
MEL & KIM - Respectable
MIKA - Big Girl (You Are Beautiful)
PETER ANDRÉ - Mysterious Girl
PLAIN WHITE T'S - Hey There Delilah
PULP - Disco 2000
RAZORLIGHT - In The Morning
RIHANNA - Umbrella
SUGABABES - Red Dress
TEXAS - Summer Son
TOTO - Hold The Line
WHAM! - Club Tropicana
YAZZ - The Only Way Is Up

BEST BIT!



Seeing Peter Andre sing his timeless classic. Once a respected artist, now just Mr Jordan.

GM JUDGEMENT

OVERALL Hardly seasonal but a good selection of indy, pop and white-lady soul. **80%**

PS3 OUT: NOW • PRICE: £39.99 • DEV: NEW ENTERTAINMENT
PUB: SONY • OPTIONAL: GUNCON • PLAYERS: 1-2

BEST BIT!

Knowing the patterns of bad guys so well that you can pick them off with rhythmic efficiency.

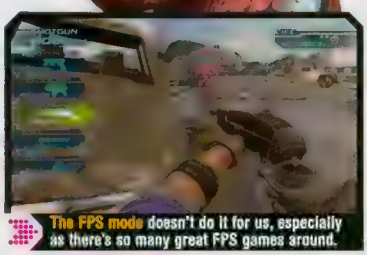
TIME CRISIS 4

Time's up for the *Crisis*...

Time Crisis feels old. There may be a new Guncon and some quirky gameplay modes, but compared to *Resi 4* on the Wii and the numerous stellar-quality first-person shooters out there, it feels like yesterday's news. What doesn't help is the day-glo chunky design of the lightgun and the odd sensors that you have to balance on your telly making it more novelty than next-gen.

Even once you've got past the shame of holding a tangerine-coloured weapon *Time Crisis* offers a lot to be disappointed about, especially the Full Mission mode that requires you to guide your character around levels with the nub-sized D-pad found on the lightgun. It doesn't work and fails to offer the dynamism of the typical on-rail lightgun shooter or the complexity of a first-person shooter.

Of course you can revert to the on-rails action in the Arcade mode, but console versions of *Time Crisis* have always felt like half the experience without the recoil or the duck pedal you find on the arcade cabinet. All these niggling annoyances are then topped off by the presence of a swarm of tiny nano-beetles as the main enemy! It just feels like overkill. **Dave** GM



The FPS mode doesn't do it for us, especially as there's so many great FPS games around.

GM JUDGEMENT

OVERALL A series that's running out of steam, and the new features compound it. **52%**

OUT: NOW • PRICE: £24.99 • DEVELOPER: OMEGA FORCE • PUBLISHER: KOEI
CONTACT: WWW.KOEI.COM/SAMURAIWARRIORS • PLAYERS: 1-2

SAMURAI WARRIORS 2 Xtreme Legends

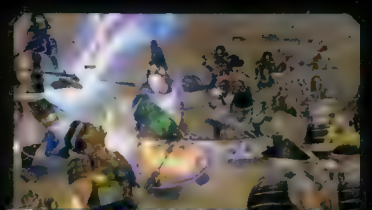
BEST BIT!

Satisfying your inner mass murderer with a Musou attack that wipes out scores of opponents.

These guys just keep on fighting. Bet you we get bored first...

If the *Dynasty Warriors* series was a cow, then developers Omega Force have milked the poor bovine until it got sore. For the best part of a decade, we've been given countless follow-ups with little in the way of evolution. Technically, *Samurai Warriors 2: Xtreme Legends* is the sequel of a derivative of another spin-off and, unsurprisingly, it's more hack-and-slash ad nauseam.

Six new characters, a Mercenary Mode and the chance to 'remix' this with the previous *Samurai Warriors: Xtreme Legends* (so you can replay missions with new characters and raise their level caps) do little to change our belief that this is another by-the-numbers game rather than anything different and interesting. It's not unplayable or ugly, we just think that the poor cow needs to be given a rest so we can taste something innovative and less likely to give us arthritis. **Shaun** GM



Hack, slash, hack, slash, hack, hack, hack, slash, slash. Until the end of time.

GM JUDGEMENT

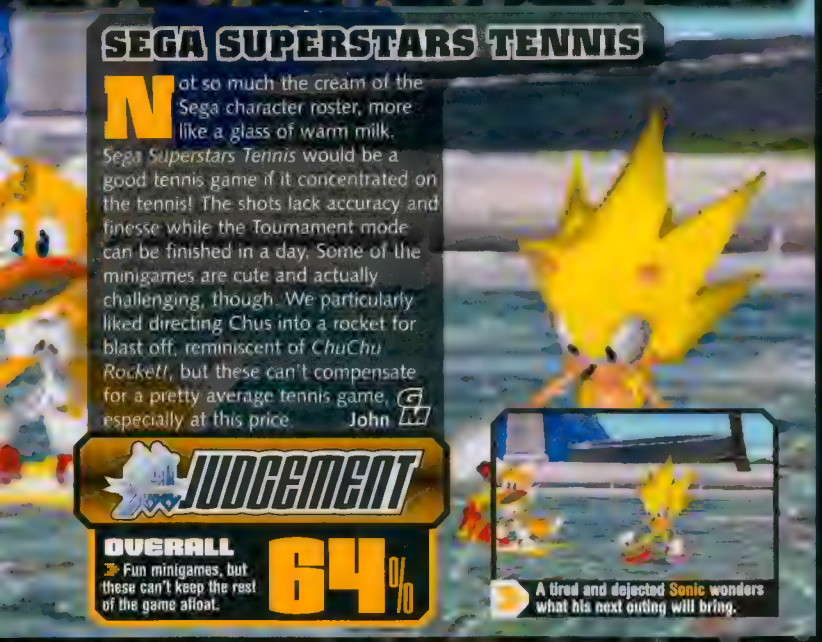
OVERALL There's very little to differentiate this from other *Warriors* titles. **52%**

REVIEWS ROUND-UP

DS · OUT: NOW · PRICE: £29.99 · DEVELOPER: SUMO DIGITAL · PUBLISHER: SONY · PLAYERS: 1-4

SEGA SUPERSTARS TENNIS

Not so much the cream of the Sega character roster, more like a glass of warm milk. *Sega Superstars Tennis* would be a good tennis game if it concentrated on the tennis! The shots lack accuracy and finesse while the Tournament mode can be finished in a day. Some of the minigames are cute and actually challenging, though. We particularly liked directing Chus into a rocket for blast off, reminiscent of *ChuChu Rocket!*, but these can't compensate for a pretty average tennis game, especially at this price. John GM



JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 64%

Fun minigames, but these can't keep the rest of the game afloat.

A tired and dejected Sonic wonders what his next outing will bring.

PS3 · OUT: NOW (PS3 TBC) · PRICE: 800 MS POINTS (PS3 TBC) · DEV: INFINITY WARD · PUB: ACTIVISION · ONLINE: ALL COD 4 MODES · PLAYERS: 1-24

Location, location – the new maps really are something special.

COD 4 – THE VARIETY MAP PACK

An introduction is hardly needed so here are the facts: the map pack features four new killing fields for you to play online. Killhouse and Broadcast will be partly familiar from the main game, whereas Chinatown (a complex and staggeringly detailed urban area) and Creek (an altitudinal rural Russian playground) are large and hugely impressive additions to the roster. If you've got *CoD4* you'll no doubt buy it anyway, but rest assured that this is a thrilling and affordable update well worth your time. John GM

JUDGEMENT

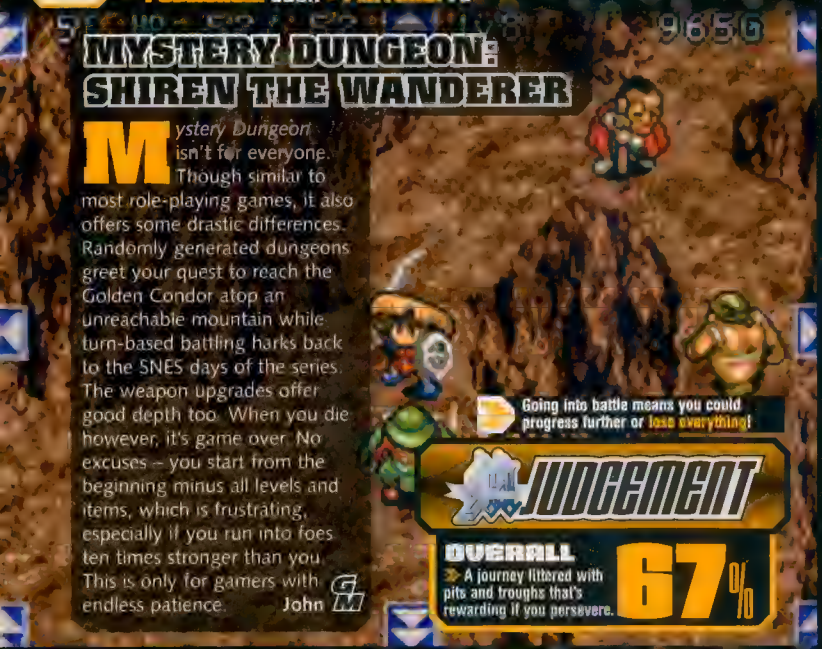
OVERALL 89%

A high quality add-on that will only increase *CoD*'s multiplayer heft.

DS · OUT: NOW · PRICE: £29.99 · DEVELOPER: CHUNSOFT · PUBLISHER: SEGA · PLAYERS: 1-2

MYSTERY DUNGEON: SHIREN THE WANDERER

Mystery Dungeon isn't for everyone. Though similar to most role-playing games, it also offers some drastic differences. Randomly generated dungeons greet your quest to reach the Golden Condor atop an unreachable mountain while turn-based battling harks back to the SNES days of the series. The weapon upgrades offer good depth too. When you die however, it's game over. No excuses – you start from the beginning minus all levels and items, which is frustrating, especially if you run into foes ten times stronger than you. This is only for gamers with endless patience. John GM



Going into battle means you could progress further or lose everything!

JUDGEMENT

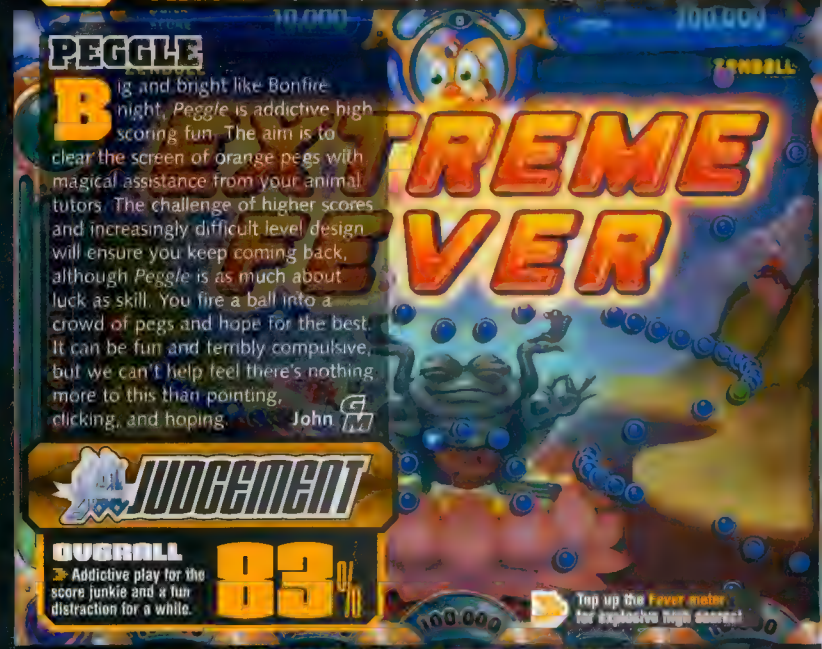
OVERALL 67%

A journey littered with pits and troughs that's rewarding if you persevere.

PC · OUT: NOW · PRICE: £9.99 · DEVELOPER: POPCAP GAMES · PUBLISHER: POPCAP GAMES · PLAYERS: 1-2

PEGGLE

Big and bright like Bonfire night, *Peggle* is addictive high scoring fun. The aim is to clear the screen of orange pegs with magical assistance from your animal tutors. The challenge of higher scores and increasingly difficult level design will ensure you keep coming back, although *Peggle* is as much about luck as skill. You fire a ball into a crowd of pegs and hope for the best. It can be fun and terribly compulsive, but we can't help feel there's nothing more to this than pointing, clicking, and hoping. John GM



JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 83%

Addictive play for the score junkie and a fun distraction for a while.

Top up the Fever meter for explosive high scores!

PC · OUT: NOW · PRICE: TBC · DEVELOPER: IRONCLAD · PUBLISHER: STARDOCK · PLAYERS: 1-10

SINS OF A SOLAR EMPIRE

Sins of a Solar Empire is confusing. Initial tutorials tell you how to politically police entire galaxies then you're expected to manage whilst under constant attack. The steep learning curve however makes it hugely satisfying when your space fleet later flattens other races as you vie for control of the galaxies. Give it time and you'll find this to be a deep, involving real-time strategy game that'll last you for months. John GM

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 86%

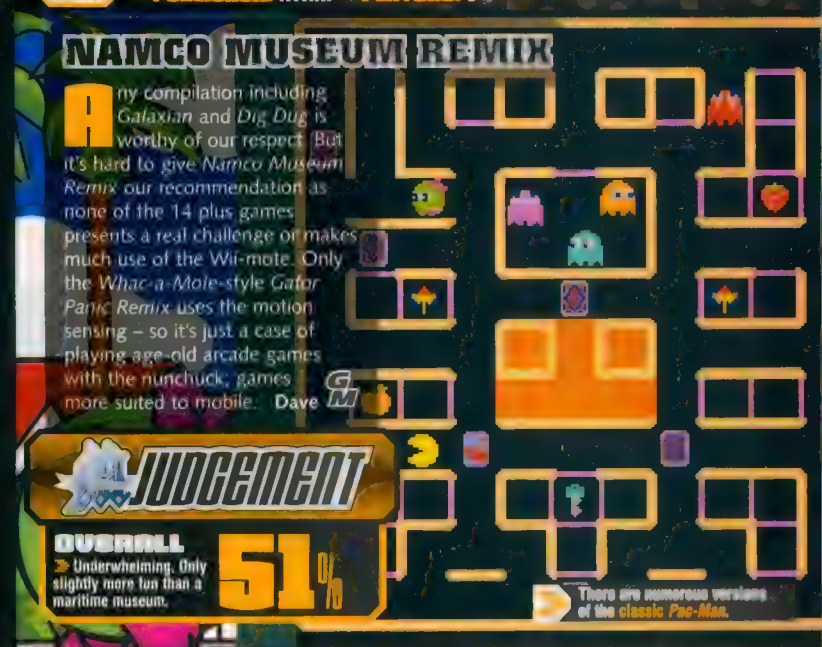
Not for casual play, but big enough to block up a black hole.

Research your ships to maximum potential to conquer the galaxy.

Wii · OUT: NOW · PRICE: £29.99 · DEVELOPER: NAMCO · PUBLISHER: ATARI · PLAYERS: 1-4

NAMCO MUSEUM REMIX

Any compilation including *Galaxian* and *Dig Dug* is worthy of our respect. But it's hard to give *Namco Museum Remix* our recommendation as none of the 14 plus games presents a real challenge or makes much use of the Wii-mote. Only the *Whac-a-Mole*-style *Gator Panic Remix* uses the motion sensing – so it's just a case of playing age-old arcade games with the nunchuck; games more suited to mobile. Dave GM



JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 51%

Underwhelming. Only slightly more fun than a maritime museum.

There are numerous versions of the classic *Pac-Man*.

CHEAT MASTER

QUALITY CHEATAGE SINCE 1993

CHECK OUT THE CHEATS BOOK FOR MORE!

"Hey... hey, buddy. Shhh. Yeah, come over here. Real casual, like. You want some cheats? I got level uppers, character unlockers, cheats that'll make you frickin' invincible man! Yeah, yeah – of course they're all above board! What you taking me for, huh? Some kinda pusher? Now, tell me what you're looking for and I'll let you get to secret worlds you never been to. You'll be back. They always come back..."

With a little help from your GM friends!

TIP OF THE MONTH

Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX VEGAS 2

CRAZY RAGDOLL EFFECTS
Pause the game then hold RB and press A, A, B, B, A, X, Y, Y, A, B, X, Y.

THIRD PERSON VIEW
Pause the game then hold RB and press X, B, X, B, click Left Stick, Left Stick, Y, A, Y, A, Right Stick, Right Stick.

INVISIBLE HOOD
Pause the game then hold RB and press B, X, A, Y, click Left Stick, Y, A, X, B, click Right Stick.

NEW GUNS

GET THE M468 ASSAULT RIFLE
At the Start screen, hold RB and press ↑, Y, ↓, A, ←, X, →, B, ←, ←, →, X.

BIG HIT HALO
Pause the game then hold RB and press the Left Stick, Right Stick, Left Stick, Left Stick, then press A, B, X, Y.

BI JOHN DOE MODE
Pause the game then hold RB and click Left Stick, press A, click Right Stick, Right Stick, press B, Left Stick, Left Stick, press A, click Right Stick, right Stick, Y, Y, and then do

experience points, the next time you fight helmet[illegible] when you start a new game.

Bill and Ted's Excellent Middle East Adventure. Now with even less taste! Hurrah...

ARMY OF TWO
PS3 X360

- ☑ ALL WEAPONS
- ☑ MORE DIFFICULTY

ALL PRIMARY WEAPONS
Complete the game on the Recruit or Contractor setting.

ALL SECONDARY WEAPONS
Complete the game on the Professional setting.

ALL SPECIAL WEAPONS
Complete the game on the Professional setting.

PROFESSIONAL DIFFICULTY
Complete it once on Recruit or Contractor.

GOD OF WAR: CHAINS OF OLYMPUS PSP

- ☑ EXTRA DIFFICULTY SETTINGS
- ☑ BEHIND THE SCENES EXTRAS
- ☑ UNLOCKABLE COSTUMES
- ☑ HIDDEN LEVELS

CHALLENGE OF HADES
Complete the game on any difficulty setting.

CHARACTER CONCEPT ART
Complete the game on any difficulty setting.

ENVIRONMENTS CONCEPT ART
Complete the Challenge of Hades.

GOD MODE
Complete the game on any difficulty.

VIEW IN-GAME CUT SCENES
Complete the game on any difficulty setting.

INSIDE READY AT DAWN STUDIOS
Complete the game on any difficulty setting.

MAKING OF ATTICA
Complete the game on God difficulty.

MCKRATOS COSTUME
Complete the Challenge of Hades (increases your attack skill).

MIME OF WAR COSTUME
Complete the game on God difficulty (for invisible weapons and 10 red orbs).

OUTTAKES CONCEPT ART
Complete the game on the God difficulty.

Kratos in an unusual moment of calm. Probably crying about his wife and kid again, the big baby.

YOUR TOP 10 TIPS

Share your top tips with us – the best one wins a game!

1. RAINBOW SIX: VEGAS 2 PS3 PC

In order to unlock the TAR-21 Assault Rifle, press START and hold RB and press: ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, X, B, X, B, Y, ↑, ↑.

Tony Brooks, Birmingham

2. ALIEN [illegible] PS2

All characters, levels and hats
At the Options Menu, go to the names area and type in ROYGBIV for player one.

PAL mod

3. DEVIL MAY CRY 4 [illegible]

Use the Hatred's fist
Evolution: Press B.
Hatred: Hold B press the Left Analog Stick left or right three times. You can only aim up or down so be careful here.
Revenge: While in Hatred mode, spin the Left Analog Stick twice in any direction.
Jealousy: Press B while in mid-air.
[illegible]: Press B with your Disaster gauge filled. Press B to unleash the special attack and B for regular attacks.
Trick: Hold L1, press back on the left stick and

GREATEST CHEATS EVER!

THE *ONI*-LY WAY IS UP!

ONI (PS2, PC)

PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2002

Oni may not be a game that set the world alight. But don't forget, this third-person, *Ghost in the Shell*-inspired adventure was published by Rockstar and developed by Bungie! It also happens to have a wealth of codes that ticked every box for the discerning cheater: unlimited health, unlimited ammo, level skips, tiny characters, big heads... It's got the lot. So, the game may have been mediocre but the cheats were certainly top drawer.

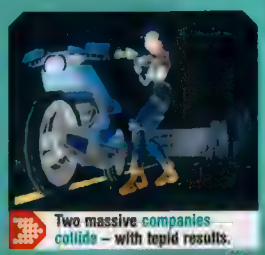
Press select and highlight help. Then, press L2, L1, L2, ▢, ◯ and ▢. You can now activate all the other cheats.

R3, L3, R3, ◯.

L3, R3, L2, L1.

▶, ▢, ◯, ▶.

L3, R3, ▢, ◯.



Two massive companies collide – with tepid results.

Find *Ring of Fates* too easy? Then you need to make it more difficult with these unlockables.

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: RINGS OF FATES DS

- ☑ EXTRA DIFFICULTY SETTINGS
- ☑ NEW GAME+
- ☑ EXTRA DUNGEON

SPUD OF WAR COSTUME
Complete the game on any difficulty (increases your Magic skill).

THE LOST LEVELS
Complete the Challenge of Hades.

HARD MODE
Clear all the stages once.

VERY HARD MODE
Clear all the Hard mode stages.

NEW GAME+
Complete the game once. Complete it again for New Game++.

EXTRA DUNGEON
Clear the game once and start a New Game+ file. Now clear the second Varl Mountain event.

Robot was ushered off to the naughty corner.

YU-GI-OH! WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2008 DS

- ☑ UNLOCKABLE DUELLISTS
- ☑ UNLOCKABLE DISKS
- ☑ UNLOCKABLE DECKS

Complete the following in World Tour mode to unlock the following:

ADRIAN GECKO DISK
Defeat Exodius the Ultimate Forbidden One.

ALCHEMY DUEL DISK
Beat Jaden Yuki 10 times.

ALEXIS RHODES IN CPU DUEL
Complete five of Guardian Savan's Tests in World 2.

press ◯.

Hold R1 and press forward on the left stick and press ◯.

While playing the game, hold L1 and press R2, R2, R2 on controller two.

While playing the game, hold L1 and press ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑ on controller two to unlock all weapons.

Unlock the Tokyo Highway. Then, go to Speed Trap 1 for the Tuner class, and select the Speed King difficulty. Win first place without damage to earn $7,000.

Repeat this as many times as desired.

At least some easy cash might make the PSP version

Successfully complete the indicated task to get the corresponding monster from the Commissioner's employees:

Get all monsters.

Get 200 monsters.

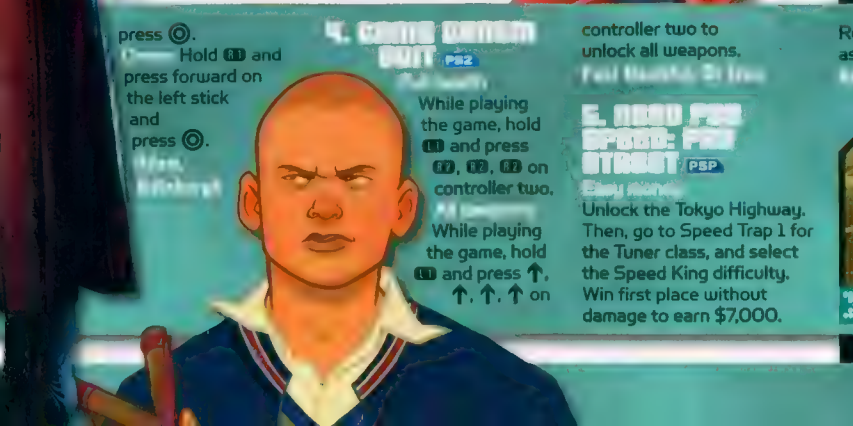
Get all skills.

Get 100 monsters.

Get 150 skills.

Get 100 skills.

Successfully complete the monster and skill libraries.



TOP 20 CHEATS

Cheats for the best-selling games around! Check out our updated UK Top 20 on p18...

01 [redacted] PS2

DO IT: Save up 2 million credits.
WHAT IT DOES: Allows you to buy the F12007 Formula 1 Car.

02 TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX VEGAS 2 PS3

DO IT (FOR 360): Pause, hold RB and press B, X, A, Y, click left analog stick, press Y, A, X, B, click right analog stick (in single-player).
WHAT IT DOES: Gives the characters big heads!

03 MARIO AND SONIC AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES DS

DO IT: Finish the Big Bang Circuit in first place.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks the alternative ending.

04 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008 PS2 PS3 DS PSP

(FOR THE 360 VERSION) DO IT: Play 500 matches, score 1000 goals and win all of the leagues and cups
WHAT IT DOES: Awards you 100 achievement points! Yeah!

05 GUITAR HERO 3: LEGENDS OF ROCK PS2

DO IT: At the main menu, select 'options', then 'cheats' and enter: Orange, Blue, Orange, Yellow, Orange, Blue, Orange, Yellow.
WHAT IT DOES: Lets you cycle through the Hyperspeed modes.

06 SEGA SUPERSTAR TENNIS PS3

DO IT: Successfully complete Exhibition Singles in the Sonic the Hedgehog stage.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks the Sonic The Hedgehog bonus court.

07 CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE PS3 DS PC

DO IT: Collect eight pieces of Intel throughout the levels.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks the hilarious Ragtime Warfare mode.

08 VIKING: BATTLE FOR ASGARD PS3

DO IT: Kill 200 Legion Soldiers using a Fatality move.
WHAT IT DOES: Rewards you with a combined 115 achievement points!

09 FIFA 08 PS2 PS3 DS PSP

DO IT: In the Be A Pro season, choose to play in a midfield position.
WHAT IT DOES: Allows you to stay up front like a striker or fall back in defence, making the tasks easier to complete.

10 DR KAWASHIMA'S BRAIN TRAINING DS

DO IT: At the title screen say "glasses glasses" into the microphone.
WHAT IT DOES: Makes the doctor remove his glasses and say something to you.

11 [redacted]

DO IT: During a single-player game in the Shooting Range, press a button on a second Wii-mote.
WHAT IT DOES: You will now have two sets of crosshairs, and if you are quick enough, twice the shots.

12 [redacted]

DO IT: Jab the Wii-mote forward to shoot in Hoops or Super Hoops.
WHAT IT DOES: Gets you easy points in Hoops or Super Hoops.

13 LA. BULLY: SCHOLARSHIP EDITION

DO IT (FOR 360): While playing, hold LB and press ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑ on controller 2.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks all weapons.

14 ARMY OF TWO PS3

DO IT: Complete the game on the Recruit difficulty.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks all primary weapons for use.

15 THE SIMPSON'S GAME PS2 PS3 DS PSP

DO IT (FOR PS3): At the main menu, press →, ←, ▢, ▢, △, R3 (or ➡, ⬅, X, X, Y, right analog stick on 360).
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks Bart's costumes/trophies.

16 COMMAND & CONQUER: KANE'S WRATH PC

DO IT: Find a copy of *Species 2* on DVD.
WHAT IT DOES: Watch it to remember why you liked Natasha Henstridge...

17 [redacted] PS3

DO IT: At the main menu, hold L1 + L2 + L3 + R1 + R2 + R3 + left analog stick down + right analog stick up.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks all bonuses. Be warned this will disable your career progress in the game.

18 COOKING MAMA 2: DINNER WITH FRIENDS DS

DO IT: Meet all 10 friends in Let's Cook mode.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks a golden statue of Mama.

19 [redacted]

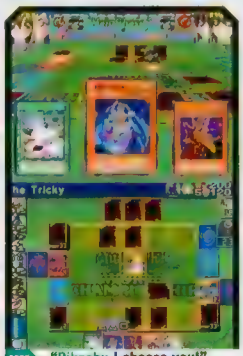
DO IT: Sucessfully complete the game.
WHAT IT DOES: Allows you to replay memory blocks and kill people without consequence.

20 [redacted] PSP

DO IT: At the mission selection screen, press ➡. Select "Extras", then at the secret code option enter: Cannonbolt, Heatblast, Wildvine, 4arms.
WHAT IT DOES: Allows you to go from alien to alien with no timer.

Cheat Master

"Go Fish! No, that's wrong... er... Snap!" "Get out."



"Pikachu I choose you!" "You don't get it, do you?"

AMAZONESS DUEL DISK AND CARD SET
Defeat Amazoness Paladin using all structure decks.

AQUARIAN ALESSA IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Maiden of the Aqua in World 2 five times.

ATTICUS RHODES IN CPU DUEL
Complete the Neo-Daedalus challenge in World 2.

BASTION MISAWA
Defeat Amazoness Paladin with all 13 structure decks.

CHRYSALIS DOLPHIN IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Abyss Soldier in World 2 five times.

CURSE OF DARKNESS IN WORLD CHAMP MODE
Defeat Curse of Darkness after talking to Gigobyte.

CURSE OF VAMPIRE
Defeat Curse of Vampire in World of Grace.

DD WARRIOR LADY IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Warrior Lady of the Wasteland in World 2 five times.

DARK SCORPION-MEANAE THE THORN IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Don Zaloog in the Pyramid in World 2 five times.

E-HERO LADY HEAT
Beat E-Hero Knospe five times.

GEAR GOLEM THE MOVING FORTRESS IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Stronghold the Moving Fortress in World three five times.

GORGEOUS DUEL DISK
Beat Jesse Anderson 10 times.

GRAVEKEEPER'S CHIEF IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Gravekeeper's Commandant in the pyramid in World 2 five times.

HINO KAGU-TSUCHI IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Dark Dusk Spirit in the pyramid in World 2 five times.

LL BLUD IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Blazewing Butterfly five times.

KAIBAMAN DUEL DISK
Beat Seto Kaiba 10 times.

KAISER SEA HORSE IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Sea Serpent Warrior of Darkness in World 2 five times.

KING OF THE SKULL SERVANTS
Beat Skull Servant five times.

LUSTER DRAGON #2
Defeat Luster Dragon in the Civilisation World five times.

MARCEL BONAPARTE IN CPU DUEL
Complete the Exxod Challenge.

MARIE THE FALLEN ONE
Defeat Absorbing Kid from the Sky in World 5 five times.

MAXIMILLION PEGASUS IN WORLD CHAMP MODE
Defeat all five Guardian Sphinx challenges in World 2.

MAXIMILLION PEGASUS
Clear all five of Guardian Sphinx's Duel Puzzles.

OJAMA YELLOW AND BLOWBACK DRAGON
Defeat Blowback Dragon in Civilisation World five times.

OTOHIME
Defeat Otohime in World of Sunlight.

REAPER ON THE NIGHTMARE IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Nightmare Penguin in World 1 five times.

SABERSAURUS IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Kabazauls in World 2 five times.

SAND MOTH
Defeat Sand Moth in the World of Sunlight.

SLIPHEED IN CPU DUEL
Defeat Storm Shooter in World 1 five times.

SPIRIT OF THE PHARAOH
Defeat Spirit of the Pharaoh in the World of Sunlight.

SYRUS TRUESDALE IN WORLD CHAMP MODE
Defeat all five Guardian Embust Challenges in World 1.

TAG DUELS
Complete the first three Worlds.

THE UNHAPPY MAIDEN IN CPU MODE
Give The Unhappy Maiden five Life Point restoring cards in World 3.

TOURNAMENT MODE
Unlock all the Duelists in the World Championship Mode.

UNLOCK SAND MOTH IN CPU DUEL MODE
Help Pyramid Turtle in World 2, then defeat Sand Moth.

WATER DRAGON
Defeat Kairyu-shin five times.

WOODBORG INPACHI
Defeat three Inpachis in Civilisation World.

YELLOW DUELS DISK
Defeat all World 1 opponents.

YELLOW UNIFORM
Defeat the first four Duellists in Free Tag Duel.

BULLY: SCHOLARSHIP EDITION

☑ CHEAT CODES

Enter all these cheats on a second controller during normal gameplay.

ALL WEAPONS
Hold LB and press ⬆, ⬆, ⬇, ⬆.

FULL HEALTH
Hold LB and press RT, RT, and RT.

INFINITE AMMO
Hold LB and press ⬆, ⬇, ⬆, ⬇.

EXTRA CASH
Hold LB and press Y, X, B, A.

These guys have eaten too many braaainnsss...

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2&3 RETURN

☑ UNLOCKABLE MODES
☑ MINIGAMES

VERY EASY AND VERY HARD MODE
Complete *House of the Dead 2&3*.

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 MINIGAME
Complete *House of the Dead 2* Original Mode and select *House of the Dead 2* again to begin the minigame.

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 3 EXTREME MODE
Complete *House of the Dead 2&3* to unlock the Extreme Mode. Enemies can only by killed by hitting weak spots.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 6

☑ UNLOCKABLE CHARACTERS

CAO CAO
Clear Musou Mode with three Wei characters.

CAO PI
Defeat Cao Pi within five minutes on Sun Jian side of He Fei.

CAO REN
Succeed in Battle Objective two on the Lu Bu side of Fan Castle.

DIAO CHAN
Clear Musou Mode with one character from each Kingdom.

DONG ZHUO
Succeed in Battle Objective 1 on the Lu Bu side of The Battle of Hu Lao Gate.

GAN NING
Clear Musou Mode with one Wu character.

GUAN PING
Succeed in two battle objectives on the Shu side of Fan Castle and finish the battle with Guan Ping alive.

HUANG GAI
Succeed in Battle Objective 3 on the Wu side of The Battle of Chi Bi.

HUANG ZHONG
Succeed in one battle objective on the Wei side of Ding Jun Mountain.

LIAO TONG
Succeed in Battle Objective 1 on the Wei side of the Battle of Shi Ting.

LIU BEI
Clear Musou Mode with three Shu characters.

LU BU
Clear Musou Mode with Liu Bei, Cao Cao, Diao Chan, and Sun Jian.

LU MENG
Succeed in two battle objectives on the Wei side of He Fei.

MA CHAO
Succeed in two battle objectives on the Wei side of Han Zhong Attack Defense Battle.

PANG TONG
Succeed in three battle objectives at the Cheng Du battle and finish the battle with Pang Tong alive.

SUN CE
Succeed in Battle Objective 1 on the Sun Jian side of the Battle of Xia Pi.

SUN JIAN
Clear Musou Mode with three Wu characters.

SUN QUAN
Succeed in Battle Objective 1 on the Lu Bu side of The Battle of Chi Bi.

TAISHI CI
Defeat him in the Battle for Wu Territory.

WEI YAN
Succeed in two battle objectives on the Shu

The Hardest Games in the World

GRAN TURISMO 4

(MULTI)

PUBLISHER: POLYPHONY DIGITAL
YEAR OF RELEASE: 2005

Everyone hates the licence tests in *Gran Turismo 4*. Few people – even those with petrolheads of such octane that they daren't go near a lit match – had the grim determination and obsessive compulsive behaviour to repeat such utterly mundane manoeuvres over and over again, without so much as touching a blade of grass. Especially as you had to do so quicker than a time set by a man chained to a desk at Polyphony Digital who probably viewed the game as a string of green numbers scrolling across his screen.

And what do you win for all this repetitive, painstaking, infuriating hard work and 80 gold licenses? A 1915 Ford Model T with 20-odd horsepower. Woo bloody hoo.

All that effort and your reward is this – Chitty Ruddy Bang Bang. Cheers Polyphony Digital, just what we always wanted.

YOUR TOP 10 TIPS

The world is running out of fossil fuels! Quick – to the gas-hungry tanks and choppers!

Noob (0 points): suicide 10 times in a multiplayer match
Fashion Police (100 points): Knock off 20 hats in a multiplayer match.

PSP

Get the Gashapon hat on mission 17.

Get the Zapaton hat on Creatures of the Sand.

Get the Kimpon hat on mission 14.

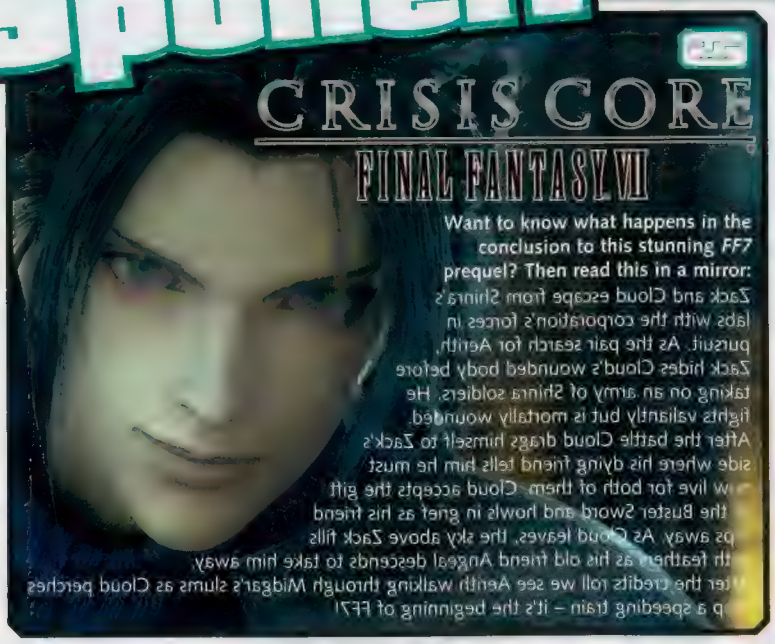
Get the Kampon hat on the Search for a Lucky Star mission.

Get the Pakapon hat on mission 2.

PS2

After completing the game one you'll have access to FPS mode, which gives infinite ammo for your weapons.

Spoiler!



Want to know what happens in the conclusion to this stunning *FF7* prequel? Then read this in a mirror:

Zack and Cloud escape from Shinra's labs with the corporation's forces in pursuit. As the pair search for Aerith, Zack hides Cloud's wounded body before taking on an army of Shinra soldiers. He fights valiantly but is mortally wounded. After the battle Cloud drags himself to Zack's side where his dying friend tells him he must live for both of them. Cloud accepts the gift of the Buster Sword and howls in grief as his friend slips away. As Cloud leaves, the sky above Zack fills with feathers as his old friend Angeal descends to take him away. After the credits roll we see Aerith walking through Midgar's slums as Cloud perches on a speeding train – it's the beginning of FF7!

side of WuZhang Plains and finish the battle with Wei Yan alive.

XIAHOU YUAN
Succeed in one battle objective on the Shu side of Ding Jun Mountain.

XIAO QUIO
Succeed in Battle Objective 3 on the Wu side of the Battle of Shi Ting

XU CHU
Kill Cao Ren and Xu Chu.

XU HUANG
Succeed in two battle objectives on the Wei/Wu side of Fan Castle.

YUAN SHAO
As Wei, complete all three targets and capture Wu Chao before completing the stage.

Hack! Slash! Hack! Slash! Hack! Slash! Hack! Slash! Hack! Slash! Isn't history exciting?

YUE YING
Succeed in Battle Objective 1 on the Wei side of the Battle of Wu Zhang Plains.

ZHANG JIAO
Beat the stage with completing all three targets in the Yellow Turban Rebellion. Playable in only Free Mode and Challenge Mode.

ZHANG LIAO
Clear Musou Mode with one Wei character.

ZHEN JI
Succeed in Battle Objective 1 on the Lu Bu side of the Xu Du Invasion.

ZHENG HE
Succeed in two battle objectives on the Shu side of Han Zhong Attack Defense Battle.

ZHOU TAI
Succeed in three battle objectives on the Shu side of Yi Ling.

ZHUGE LIANG
Clear Musou Mode with one Shu character.

WE WANT YOUR TIPS!

We want your best tips and secrets for any game. Make sure they're cool things you've discovered and email them to gamesmastertips@futurenet.co.uk or by post to My Top Ten Tips, GamesMaster, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. The best tip every month gets a free game.

LIL' VIKING: BATTLE FOR ASGARD

Want to get loads of easy Achievement Points to build up your 360 Gamerscore? Then *Viking: Battle for Asgard* is the game to play! Once you've killed 500 Legion soldiers, you'll have received at least 165 Achievement Points. Over the course of playing, no doubt you'll kill Champions, Giants and Assassins too – meaning you can gather over 200 Achievement Points in just a few hours!

Lauren Connor, email

The 360 version of *Viking* offers plenty of rewards for slaughter – looks like there's plenty of potential down there...

CONSOLETATION ZONE

***GM* – coming to the aid of stuck gamers since 1993!**

MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM 2 PSP

Dear *GM*,

I've been playing *Monster Hunter Freedom 2* on the PSP and was wondering if you could help. There are so many different weapons and styles to choose from, I can't work out which is best. Any suggestions?

Simon Porter, Bristol

Here's a brief rundown to help you make that first tough decision between Gunners and Blademasters...

SWORD AND SHIELD
For: Swift attacks, good defence, high sharpness, great for party battles, can use items with weapons unsheathed.
Against: Poor weapon reach, doesn't provide enough damage later.

DUAL SWORDS
For: Really fast attacks, good for taking on crowds.
Against: No blocking, poor damage, reach/sharpness, only deals 70% of added elemental damages.

GREATSWORDS
For: Good reach, high damage, can block attacks, added kick attack and three-stage charge attack.
Against: Slow movement, slow attacks, poor when fighting with a party.

LONGSWORDS
For: Fast attack speed, good weapon reach, can deal elemental damage quickly, good for crowds.
Against: Disruptive in online play, not very powerful, no blocking.

LANCES
For: High damage, decent attack speed, long weapon reach, large shield, can cut and smash enemies.
Against: Takes a long time to master, slow movement speed, stamina draining.

GUNLANCE
For: Long combos, great damage and attack speed, long reach, same perks as Lance but with added gun.
Against: Difficult to master, shooting decreases sharpness, blocking drains stamina, slow movement speed.

HAMMERS
For: Massive power/damage, can charge attacks on the move, can KO enemies
Against: Slow movement and slow attacks, difficult to hit small, fast enemies, no blocking, wide swings can take out your party.

HUNTING HORNS
For: Can sense the enemy and inflict KO status, great support weapon online, has special skills.
Against: Poor weapon to use solo, average attack, needs a specific horn for a specific boss.

LIGHT BOWGUNS
For: Rapid fire, long range attacks, can stun or send enemies to sleep.
Against: Can't block, weak gunner armour, expensive ammo, weak damage, long reload times.

HEAVY BOWGUNS
For: Long range attacks, high damage, can stun, sleep or poison enemies.
Against: Same as Light Bowguns but more damage.

BOW AND ARROW
For: Can charge attacks, ranged attacks, attack monsters without getting hit, unlimited ammo.
Against: Weak, difficult to master.

GOD OF WAR 2 PS3

Hi *GM*,

In preparation for *God of War* on PSP, I've started playing *God of War 2* again. I keep hearing about the God Armour – but how do you get hold of it?

Jason Cayton, Manchester

Ah, nice and easy one this. To get hold of the God Armour, you need to receive a God ranking in Challenge Mode. Not only is it the coolest costume, but wearing it doubles all your stats!

GOT A PROBLEM? STUCK IN A GAME?
WE CAN HELP! EMAIL IT TO US AT GAMESMASTERTIPS@FUTUR[illegible]
OR WRITE TO CONSOLETATION ZONE, GAMESMASTER, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW. IF WE CAN'T HELP – YOU'VE HAD IT!

GM'S TOP 5 MOST WANTED TIPS

01: GRAND THEFT AUTO IV
As if you needed us to tell you that! Our tips only scratch the surface! Anybody got any cheats to make Liberty City a stroll through the park?

02: IRON MAN
We know that Tony Stark has got a few suits at his disposal – how do we get them all? Right now!

03: SILENT HILL: ORIGINS
The PSP versions had plenty of unlockable goodies – we presume the PS2 version is chock full too! Anyone know of any?

04: LOST IN BLUE 3
Just as difficult as ever – we need cheats to make our island survival that little bit more bearable.

05: NBA BALLERS: CHOSEN ONE
We wish we were a little bit taller. We wish we were a baller. We wish we had a girl who looked good, we would call her... We also wish for some, err, cheats for this...

KNOW HOW TO...

Nail every mission in our exhaustive guide to Liberty City!

grand theft auto IV

TIPSTER

The main story quest, if you blast through it, will last you about 24-25 hours. But to complete everything and find all the easter eggs? Some 70+ hours, easily.

Cruising the city! It's so vast, so detailed! We've included some must-see sights and things to do in this very guide!

The 'Three Leaf Clover' mission – because it's the longest mission in the game and your AI buddies are always dying!

WHERE ARE YOU STUCK?

A. Just drive around for a bit and complete some side quests - if you wait long enough, the game someone will put you back on track.

Yep, we know, we're pretty good at games. We've already completed *GTA IV* and we're happy to share our experiences too. So not only do we present the ultimate guide to completing the main story, but below and dotted around the next six pages you'll find our top tips on how to make your stay in Liberty City a VERY enjoyable one... Have a nice day, now.

ROMAN'S MISSIONS

THE COUSINS BELLIC

A nice easy introduction to *GTA*'s driving. Drive to Roman's place with your drunk cousin in tow. If you fail this, you've got a long road ahead.

IT'S YOUR CALL

Another simple mission, and your first chance to use your mobile phone. Just watch out for the loan sharks and phone Roman when they arrive. Get back to the depot. Easy.

THREE'S A CROWD

Another mission with the loan sharks. Pick up Mallory at the subway. Then go pick up Michelle, then take her back to her apartment. Call Roman and he'll tell you to buy some clothes – just don't spend too much, because money's tight at the moment.

FIRST DATE

Here you need to take Michelle bowling. We're not sure if you need to win, but she's so hopeless at bowling that you probably will anyway. Then just take her home. After this, you can call her anytime to set up another date.

BLEED OUT

Go and find Roman on the basketball court. You're going to have to fight the people beating him up, but try to only take on one at a time, or you'll get surrounded. Use the disarm on Darden to take his knife away and then stab him.

Did you know that if you find an auto you really take a shine to, you can simply park it outside one of your safe houses to 'save' it? Don't forget to return it after you're done gallivanting though, otherwise you'll lose it forever...

CHEV FARE

This is your first cab mission for Roman. Pick up Jermaine, take him where he wants, then lose the cops. After this you'll be able to take on taxi missions to earn extra money.

LITTLE JACOB'S MISSIONS

JAMAICAN HEAT

Pick up little Jacob and take him where he wants. Go to the vantage point and wait for dealers – if you stay where you're told, there's no chance of them hitting you. Shoot them all, then get back to Jacob's house. Another easy mission.

CONCRETE JUNGLE

This is your first chance to do some in-car shooting, but it's just as easy to run Little Jacob's competitors over. After that's done, take Jacob to the dealers' house and let him keep them busy while you shoot everyone. This mission introduces cover shooting if you haven't done it yet.

Some prefer the Banshee, some prefer the SabreGT but we'll take this Lamborghini rip-off's superior handling and sexy Italian looks anytime. Carjack an unsuspecting stockbroker in the trendy Algonquin district...

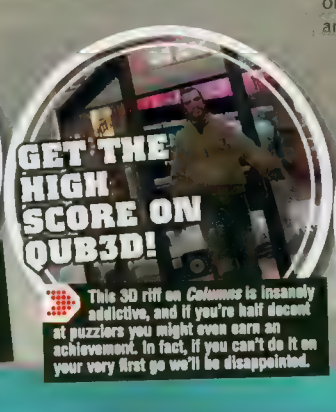
Head down to trendy boutique Perseus and lay down $3000 dollars to properly make Niko look like a gangster that's *not* to be messed with. Failing that, we always find the biker jacket/stonewashed jeans combo goes down a treat...

TOP 50...

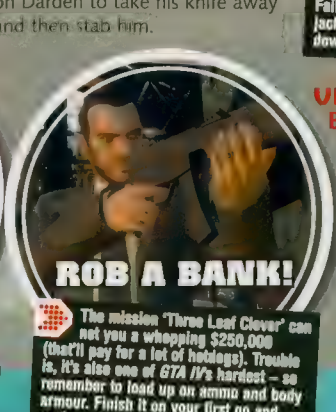
THINGS YOU MUST DO WHEN YOU VISIT LIBERTY CITY!

Welcome to Liberty City circa 2008, ladies and germs. It's certainly changed a fair bit from *GTA3*'s 2001 incarnation, but the great news is Rockstar have packed it with even more exciting, surprising, nefarious and downright *outrageous* things to see, do and steal. So, without further ado, let *GM* be your tour guide as we lead you by the hand through the mean streets. Happy hunting!

Like *Shenmue* before it, *GTA IV* is a big fan of the oche. Hit three treble twenties in a row to unlock an achievement. Question is, can you pull off a 301 six-dart checkout on your second go like us?



This 3D riff on *Columns* is insanely addictive, and if you're half decent at puzzlers you might even earn an achievement. In fact, if you can't do it on your very first go we'll be disappointed.



The mission 'Three Leaf Clover' can net you a whopping $250,000 (that'll pay for a lot of hotdogs). Trouble is, it's also one of *GTA IV*'s hardest – so remember to load up on ammo and body armour. Finish it on your first go and you're a bona fide legend!

VLAD'S MISSIONS

BULL IN A CHINA SHOP

Go to the shop that's giving Vlad trouble, and throw a brick through a window to convince them to pay up. This brick trick's handy for causing a distraction in situations when pulling a gun might be considered going a bit far.

KNOW HOW TO...

If you stumble into this joint just off Star Junction you're either in for a side-splitting cameo from *The Office* favourite Ricky Gervais or US stand-up star Katt Williams...

HUNG OUT TO DRY

Here you're chasing the owner of the Laundromat, so you'll want to pick a fairly chunky car to ram him off the road – if you hit him directly from behind you might go through the windscreen. There's a car out the back you can hotwire, but a Patriot might be a better choice.

CLEAN GETAWAY

Here you just need to catch the subway, then punch out the two guys there. If you've got a gun, just shoot them. Then it's off to the car wash and then to the garage to finish the mission.

IVAN THE NOT SO TERRIBLE

Ivan's a pretty ropey driver, so the tough bit of this mission's chasing him across the rooftops. Chase him in a car, across rooftops, stamp on his hands or let him go. This might affect what happens later, though...

Call up one of Niko's pals on your mobile and head on down to Irish pub Blarneys to sink a few jars. Remember though kids, drinking and driving ain't cool – so just remember to flag down a taxi and go sleep it off...

UNCLE VLAD

Head to Comrades but park your car out back and equip a shotgun. Pop the bodyguards, sprint through the doors, drive out front and make sure you pick up Roman, then follow Vlad. You need to be quick, but you finally get to execute the guy who's been causing you so much grief.

FAUSTIN'S MISSIONS

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

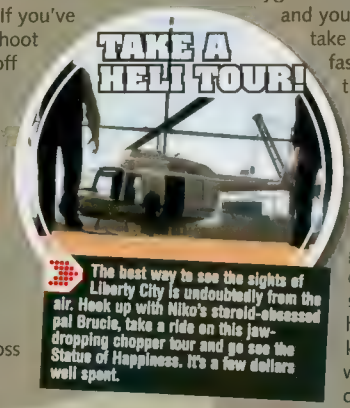
This is the first mission where you need to get a cop car: to do it, either call 911 – although this means one guy will stay in the car and need to be dealt with – or fire into the air to attract police attention. This way both cops will leave their car to investigate, and you can steal it without getting a wanted rating. Now all you have to do is pull over vans but make sure you've got a shotgun equipped for when the milk turns sour/things inevitably go wrong...

DO YOU HAVE PROTECTION?

Drive to the Sex shop, then kneecap the guy Faustin tells you to. Head back to the gun shop and you'll be rewarded with an SMG.

FINAL DESTINATION

Here you're heading to the subway to whack a guy. Have a gun ready, because one of his bodyguards has an SMG and you need to take him out fast. After that's done, sprint across the tracks and pop your target before he gets in a car. Or shoot out his tyres and kill him when he crashes.



The best way to see the sights of Liberty City is undoubtedly from the air. Hook up with Niko's steroid-obsessed pal Brucie, take a ride on this jaw-dropping chopper tour and go see the Statue of Happiness. It's a few dollars well spent.

NO LOVE LOST

This is one of the first missions where there's no point in shooting at your target – you just need to be careful you don't fall off your bike and chase him at a distance. When his gang turn up in the park, dismount at a distance from them, and use trees as cover while you shoot them all. There's no rush for this.

RIGGED TO BLOW

Here Faustin's given you a truck rigged with a bomb. Drive carefully, because one or two knocks will make it explode. Just take it to the destination, and watch it blow up from a distance. Easy.

STORY MISSION

KILLING FAUSTIN

Before taking on this mission, answer Dimitri's text to find a bulletproof vest behind the bins. Pull out your shotgun before the club. Shotgun everyone, through the alley, up the stairs. Wait for him to get to the roof, then you can do him as he pops out. Have no mercy, because he's got a machine gun.

BRUCIE'S MISSIONS

LOOSING ON

This is your introduction to the internet cafe. Just go and set up a profile at Lovemeet.com – the second part of this mission comes later.

SEARCH AND DELETE

First, get a cop car and use the computer. When you find your target, you can't stop him until a certain point, although you can shoot out his tyres. You need to watch out for trucks swerving around in the road in front of you, but the trickiest part of this mission is losing the police attention you'll get from running through toll booths. Just stay calm and don't bump or shoot any civilians and it'll be fine.

EASY AS CAN BE

This is a tough drive with lots of shooters. Brake early on the corners – it's better to slow down a bit than power slide, mess it up and have to reverse out of a spot while everyone's peppering you with gunfire.

SHADOW

Although this mission's called Shadow, you don't really need to be that stealthy – you can just spook the dealer you're after, then sprint after him. Then shoot him and his mates, and you're done.

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Little Jacob will help you out on this mission, but this is mainly about precision aiming and taking cover. You'll have to brave the cops to make it out of the front, but if you pop a couple you'll have a fairly clear route past the rest. but then it's plain sailing to lose them.

Check out the main bridges linking the islands of Liberty City and you'll spy cool little cable cars journeying back and forth across the expanse. Simply hop on over to a pay booth at either end and hop on for a hidden tourist's treat.

Fed up with waiting for slow drivers? Show your displeasure. But don't be surprised if they give you the finger or even jump out of their car and start a fight in return!

OUT OF THE CLOSET

Go to the internet cafe. Your date's going to be at the diner on 69th and Hove. There are cops around so stab him when he runs to avoid any trouble.

In the mission 'Hating the Haters', camper than camp pal Bernie is being harassed by cruel homophobes. After chuckling at his rather girly jogging style, help your old comrade whoop the bullies!

NO 1

This is the game's only story mode race – the only thing you need to worry about is the second last checkpoint where crashing through a barrier could put you in the riverbed. Otherwise, just take the corners steady – you'll have plenty of time to out-distance the other racers on the straights.

MANNY'S MISSIONS

ESCUELA OF THE STREETS

This is the first mission where you really need to fail someone. Watch out at the traffic lights and on corners, because it's easy to accidentally get too close and scare your targets off early. When you get to your destination, shoot everyone. You can either shoot the lock off the door, which'll warn them that you're coming in, or throw a brick through the window, climb in that way and take them by surprise. There's a Sprunk machine at the back of the warehouse to top up your health when you're done.

STREET SWEEPER

Here you need the element of surprise to get all your targets. Kill the first two gang members by ramming your car into them, jump out to finish

A-Train HX watch out – GTA IV has you well and truly beaten! Ride the tube across and under Liberty City in all its first-person loveliness for a measly few bucks, and enjoy the hustle and bustle of Liberty City.

What visit to Liberty City would be complete without taking in the manifold delights of a gentleman's club? Lay down some extra greenbacks and you'll even get your own personal lap dance, too...

Watch out for a crosshair appearing on your map, because there you'll meet a shady contact known only as 'The Fixer'. He'll set Niko up on some memorable Hitman-style assignments, which'll often provide you with free weapons and armour plus a hefty fee.

Stroll on over to the park and pay close attention to the dude practising the ancient Chinese martial art. If you want, you can even beat him up. Yet another cute touch in this amazing world...

CHEAT MASTER

TAKE IN THE SIGHTS OF STAR JUNCTION DURING A THUNDERSTORM!

For the first time in GTA's glorious RAGE engine, why not check out this feast of neon, lashing rain and lightning? Your pad even rumbles alongside the thunder... a classy touch.

stragglers then get the other car. There are cops everywhere, but if you start a gunfight there's a chance they'll actually do your job for you.

THE PUERTO RICAN CONNECTION

Here you're following an elevated train. Just switch to the far view with select and look out for corners by watching the radar. When it stops, pop the two goons then sprint after the guy. You can shoot him at a distance if you use the lock-on, but try to do him in one shot to minimise police interference.

ELIZABETA'S MISSIONS

LUCK OF THE IRISH

A relatively simple introduction to sniping, this. The only tricky bits are that you'll need to shoot the guy struggling with Packie on the left, and then the last guy through the window of his truck.

BLOW YOUR COVER

Don't pull a gun until you're up the first flight of stairs in this mission – even though the people downstairs threaten you, you don't actually need to take them on. On the way up the stairs, blast everyone, and grab the medipack on the stairwell. Get the vest on the rooftop, then blast a path out through the SWAT teams.

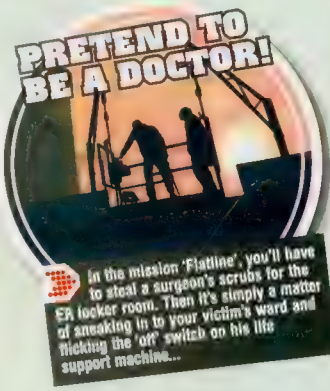
THE SNOW STORM

If you've got a sniper rifle, you can shoot the first couple of guys with that. Then head into the old hospital and methodically clear everyone out. The room with the coke has two guys with guns and a bullet proof vest inside – you'll need it to escape from the cops. Don't get bogged down in a gunfight, just clear a path and grab one of the SUVs parked on the left as you leave.

PLAYBOY X'S MISSIONS

DECONSTRUCTION FOR BEGINNERS

Although Playboy X wants you to go up on the roof with him, you don't have to – the three lookouts are on the end of each crane and you can shoot them from ground level with a sniper rifle. Switch to the AK as you enter the building site and be methodical before you move forward. Clean out as many people as you can before you shoot the third union boss – this'll send in a chopper full of backup for the final boss. You move in a fairly straight line, so as long as you don't dash forwards nobody should get behind you.



In the mission 'Flatline', you'll have to steal a surgeon's scrubs for the ER locker room. Then it's simply a matter of sneaking in to your victim's ward and flicking the 'off' switch on his life support machine...

PHOTO SHOOT

Here you'll need to use your mobile phone camera to identify your target, but as long as you get him vaguely in the shot you don't actually need to get a close-up of his face. Marlon's the one in the black jacket – he's got two cars parked for the getaway but you can pop him before he gets to them if you shoot straight away. If he makes it, they're both Patriots so you've got a tough chase ahead...

FRANCIS MCGREARY'S MISSIONS

CALL AND COLLECT

The blackmailer you're looking for's wearing a black and yellow puffy jacket. If you can't see him, just walk through the crowd – you can call him on the phone twice, but the second time Niko will start threatening him and scare him into running. There's no way to kill him without attracting police attention, so shoot him in the head and make a run for the nearest car.

Missions like 'The Snow Storm' and 'Russian Revolution' involve full scale police chases that vary from a nerve-jangling sprint to a decidedly tricky marathon. Lose them on foot to unlock an achievement!

FINAL INTERVIEW

Go to Perseus to get a suit plenty of time ahead of your job interview. Once you're in the office with him alone, shoot Goldberg. The easiest way to escape – assuming you've got a bit of health left – is to shoot out the windows and jump out, avoiding taking on security in his office. Then grab a car and make your getaway.

LUKE

Once you're on the roof with the sniper rifle there are two ways of getting the target in your sights – you can either shoot his satellite dish so that he gets up to adjust his TV, or check his phone number – it's on his phone – through your sights and give him a call to make him get up. Either way, pop him in the back of the head.

DWAYNE'S MISSIONS

RUFF RIDER

Go to the arcade: you'll be given a choice of killing a girl or letting her go, but either way you'll need to chase down her boyfriend on a motorbike. He'll crash eventually, and you can run over his head.

UNDRESS TO KILL

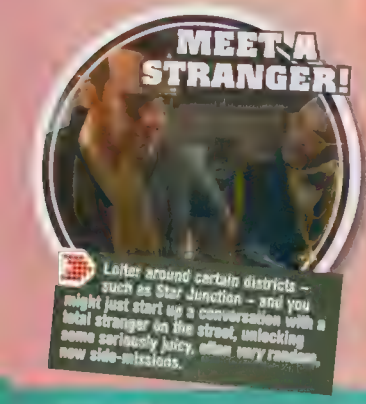
This is a slightly tough mission, because there are three guys to kill. The first is in the front office, near the doors, with a shotgun – if you sneak in, you can kill him with a melee weapon without alerting the club staff. The second target's near the stage, chatting to a stripper – you can't shoot him without causing a massive ruckus. The third guy's in a booth at the back, having a dance – he's carrying an AK and being guarded by a guy with a shotgun, but you're best off popping him second, then killing the second target when he runs. Anyone who makes it to the car park will jump in a van and head down the stairs at the rear, making you chase them - if more than one guy gets away, the passengers will shoot at you as you chase them. If you've got a car, you can block the steps, but trying to break into any of the vehicles in the car park will set off their alarm.

HAVE A HEART

This is an easy mission – just remember to pay the toll on the way to the hospital, or you'll get bogged down in a police chase and run out of time.

THE HOLLAND PLAY

This is where you get to make the game's first major decision – whether to kill Dwayne or Playboy X. Dwayne's only protected by one guy with a bat. Playboy's protected by a gang of goons, and he'll make a run for it – but killing him gets you his apartment as a safe house.



Loiter around certain districts – such as Star Junction – and you might just start up a conversation with a total stranger on the street, unlocking some seriously juicy, often very random, new side-missions.

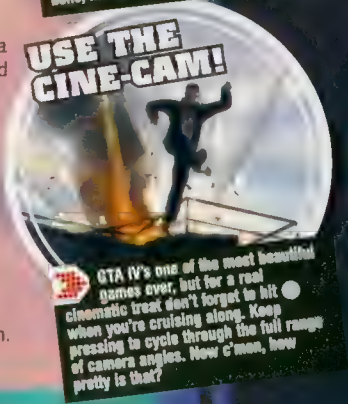
Not *Crackdown*-style obviously, but Niko is able to take a lift up to the very top floor during the day. For further larks, why not try your hand at some high altitude sniping? Bonus: the cops can't see you!

During the mission 'No.1', Niko and Brucie get to 'borrow' Manny's snazzy yellow Comet sports car. Place first and you'll get to keep it, then roll on over to a Paint 'n Spray and get it made over in the colour of your choice.

During the mission 'Truck Hustle', Niko is forced to hang on for dear life to the back of an errant speeding van. Remember to hammer the ● button to stay in one piece and roll whenever the driver takes a corner hard!

Why not look for love on the internet? Certain lovelies might even unlock handy bonuses if they, ahem... cough, get to know Niko better... You'll also unlock the hilariously named 'Mild Coffee' achievement. Ring any bells, Mr Thompson?

For the mission 'Lovemeet', Niko has to email a super camp chappie called French Tom via an internet singles site. However, far from you both finding true love, the date has a decidedly unhappy ending for poor Tom...



GTA IV's one of the most beautiful games ever, but for a real cinematic treat don't forget to hit ● when you're cruising along. Keep pressing to cycle through the full range of camera angles. Now c'mon, how pretty is that?

Once you're hooked up to the net, don't forget to shell out a few bucks for a cool MP3 ringtone, wallpaper or full-on theme. *GM*'s personal recommendation has to be Honkers!

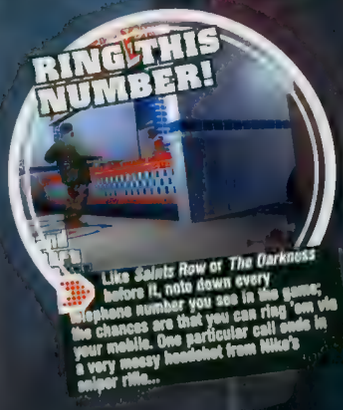
MICHELLE'S MISSION

WRONG TURN

Check your emails and go to the jewellery shop to find your target. Watch for where you can cut him off at corners as he runs and you'll be able to chase him down easily.

During the mission 'Taking in the Trash', Niko is forced to don green overalls and drive a dumpster to snag some hidden diamonds. It's not exactly the most thrilling line of work though, and what a pong!

Switch to manual fire mode by half-pressing the L Trigger and – if you're using an accurate firearm like the Desert Eagle – take foes down with a single, devastatingly effective bullet to the old grey matter...



Like *Saints Row* or *The Darkness* before it, note down every telephone number you see in the game; the chances are that you can ring 'em via your mobile. One particular call ends in a very messy headshot from Niko's sniper rifle...

PATRICK MCGREARY'S MISSIONS

HARBORING A GRUDGE

When Packie says 'Get at 'em' – DON'T. Stay hidden behind the sign with him, and pick off the Triads one by one. More will appear when you jump down, so be ready, and watch for the ones on the right. When you're done, go into the office behind the truck to find a medipack, then steal the truck. Be careful when you're dropping grenades – only do it when you're on a straight with nothing ahead, otherwise you run the risk of getting stuck and blowing yourself up.

WASTE NOT WANT KNOTS

This is your first heist with the McGreary boys, so make sure you look after them. You can barrel in the front, but there's much less risk if you climb over the fence and head for the side door. Once you're inside, the boys will announce that they're pushing forward – stay with them, or one of them'll die. Get to the office so the boys don't get shot, then sprint out again.

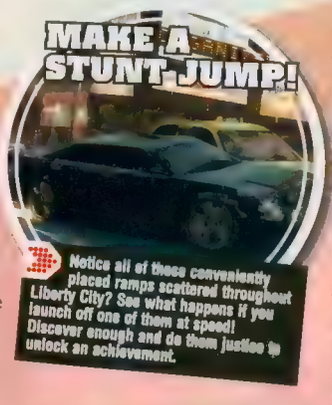
THREE LEAF CLOVER

This is one of the toughest missions in the game – and the longest. Don't get bogged down killing cops – you need to avoid taking damage and pop the guys marked in red on the radar to clear a path. Don't stay in open spaces because you'll get shot, and grab the medipack as you head into the tube station. Make sure you get a big four-door when it's time to run – you're going to have to run four police roadblocks so you need something chunky. You can get loads of distance on the bridge, but as soon as you hit the off-ramp, veer right and towards the tree-lined park – here it's pretty easy to lose the cops because they're terrible at off-roading. If you break your car but you've got rid of police attention, you can call a cab to get you back to the safe house – it's much less risky than trying to steal a car.

During the mission 'I'll Take Her' Niko takes Gracie Ancelotti's shocking pink sporty number for a spin – but watch out for your every aggressive passenger who'll continually try to drag hold of the wheel and run you right off the road...

A LONG WAY TO FALL

Check the text to find the guy you need to intimidate, then head upstairs. You need to be really careful on this mission, because every doorway means you could be shot from two angles. Stay close to the walls, and always tackle the stairs slowly. The last guy isn't packing a gun, so you don't need to worry about him too much.



Notice all of these conveniently placed ramps scattered throughout Liberty City? See what happens if you launch off one of them at speed! Discover enough and do them justice to unlock an achievement.

HOSTILE NEGOTIATIONS

Roman's been kidnapped, and it's time for a huge gunfight. On the lower levels, fire in bursts so you don't get shot while you're firing at someone else, and feel free to lob grenades around. When you get to Roman, you can use the sniper rifle for a perfect shot at the guy holding him, but it's fairly easy to just free-aim.

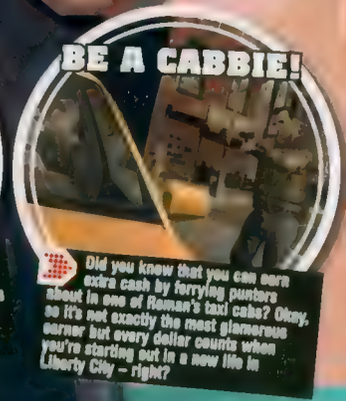
UL PAPER MISSIONS

DUST OFF

This is a pretty simple one. Just shoot the two guys guarding the chopper, then make a run for it and jump in. Nobody's going to chase you if you do it efficiently.

PAPER TRAIL

Here you need to pick up the chopper you were using earlier and fly it in a chase after another copter. The only bit to worry about is flying under the bridge – don't descend too sharply, or you're dead. After that, stay on the right of the enemy chopper to let Little Jacob get a clear shot. After that, you're free to try making friends with him.



Did you know that you can earn extra cash by ferrying punters about in one of Roman's taxi cabs? Okay, so it's not exactly the most glamorous earner but every dollar counts when you're starting out in a new life in Liberty City – right?

PORTRAIT OF A KILLER

This is basically a street fight, so you run the risk of attracting police attention if you shoot from the wrong place. You can get behind the Russians and attack from above, which is probably the best bet - otherwise they've got a height advantage on you. Just stay as far away as you can and pop the lot of them.

RAY'S MISSIONS

TAKING OUT THE TRASH

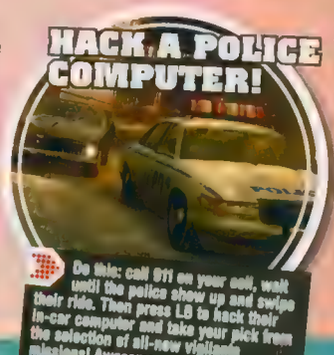
This is an easy one. The boys on the back of the Trashmaster keep the enemies off you, so you just need to drive. And not crash into anyone, obviously.

MELTDOWN

This is an easy car chase. Just make it to the park, shoot Luca's henchmen and chase him to the toilet. Shoot the doors open and you'll find Luca cowering. Kill him and leave with those lovely diamonds.

DEREK MCREARY SMACKDOWN

Tricky one, this. When you find Bucky, follow him through the back alleys to his house. Now you've got two options. You can stay at a distance and work your way in slowly, shooting the guy on the porch and then taking cover outside the door – but that'll alert the police, and there's a risk that they'll shoot you in the back. The other option is to do things quick – ram your car into the house and try to take out a couple of Bucky's boys before they get inside, then dash in and take cover behind the sofa to shoot the rest. The last man'll be hiding at the top of the stairs with a shotgun, so be careful about popping him. There's nothing you can do about the police turning up, but that can work to your advantage – if they get drawn into a firefight, they might finish off Bucky's boys for you. Whatever happens, leave via the back door and circle around to the right to find one of the getaway cars parked in the yard.



Do this: call 911 on your cell, wait until the police show up and swipe their ride. Then press LB to hack their in-car computer and take your pick from the selection of all-new vigilante missions! Awesome.

BABYSITTING

Another tough one. The key here is to stay close to Kim's boat – as long as you're relatively nearby, he won't die, even if you can't kill his pursuers. Once you get the rocket launcher, use it to take out any boats behind you, but be careful about using it on any boats near Kim's – you're probably better off switching back to the machinegun and shooting the men rather than their boat.

TUNNEL OF DEATH

There's no rush to block the tunnel here, so make sure you're loaded up before you do it. When the ambush starts, shoot the guy who's approaching you, then start rolling grenades into the police cars – don't risk using the rocket launcher, because it's too easy to blow yourself up. Once the mission's done, you can take it fairly steady in the police transport.

It's always fun to kick off a fight with a complete stranger in the middle of the street. Press ● while they're attacking and then ● for a crippling counter combo that'll take them down in no time.

STORY MISSION

BLOOD BROTHERS

This isn't really a mission – it's more like a decision. Do you shoot Francis or Derek? If you pick Francis, you'll unlock the Undertaker missions for later...

PHIL'S MISSIONS

MUSEUM PIECE

Get behind cover straight away. There are guys coming at you from all sides, so make sure your back's covered while you clear out one aisle – then you can concentrate on the others. There's a medipack at the top of the stairs, so grab that and watch out for more people appearing on the balconies as you head through the museum. When you get outside, shoot the first two guys you see, then jump in a car and lose everyone.

NO WAY ON THE SUBWAY

Another mission where you can't kill the people you're chasing

until a certain point. You'll need to chase them through the subway – you can actually kill the first biker after passing a couple of trains, but if you leave him alone he'll crash into an oncoming train on his own and die anyway. After that the last biker veers onto the bridge – follow him, and accelerate to take the jump when he brakes. He'll crash, so you can shoot him or run him over at leisure.

LATE CHECKOUT

Once you get up in the lift here the shooting's going to start straight away, so tap left on the D-pad to pull out your biggest gun and get blasting. This is actually a fairly decent place to use a rocket launcher, grenades or Molotovs, because the confined space makes them very effective. The toughest section happens as you reach the roof – the glass stops you dashing through to take cover, but doesn't stop bullets. Keep your head down and blind fire over the top to take down the first few enemies.

TRUCK HUSTLE

This one's a simple matter of shooting absolutely everyone before you even try to make it onto the truck. After you sprint to the truck and grab the back, just pull back on the stick to hang on at the corners.

TRESPASS

Phil gives you two options here, but the best one is to head around the back and shoot your way up the building. It's best to take a rocket launcher on this mission so you can take out the chopper easily, but a few clips of carbine ammo will do the job just as well.

CATCH THE WAVE

Once the shooting starts in this mission, hide behind the truck to shoot the mobsters, then stay between Phil and the boats once you're on the water. All you have to do is stay alive and on the right side of Phil and eventually you'll 'lose' the other boats. Simple.

KICK HELL'S ANGEL ASS!
To complete the mission 'No Way on the Subway', you'll need to commandeer a hog and take down some errant bikers who flee underground. Look out for the legions of homeless people living in shanty towns in the abandoned subway tunnels... poor sods.

TO LIVE AND DIE IN ALDERNEY

Things go wrong as soon as you get to Frankie's house in this mission, so be ready to get driving. You'll need to follow Phil's car – shoot at the cops if you want – until it's time to do a runner on foot. Don't worry if Frankie gets hit, because it doesn't seem to matter too much if he dies. The main thing is to lose the cops, which is easiest to do by going through people's back gardens until you cut off their line of sight.

STORY MISSION

WEEKEND AT FLORIAN'S

Instead of getting a GPS in this mission, you need to listen to directions. If you can't be bothered with that, though, just head to Middle Park West in Broker – that's where you'll find Florian.

BERNIE'S MISSIONS

HATING THE HATERS

This is another chase scene where you can't kill your target until a certain point. Just be aware that you'll have to pick Bernie up on your moped because you don't want to drive past and lose him.

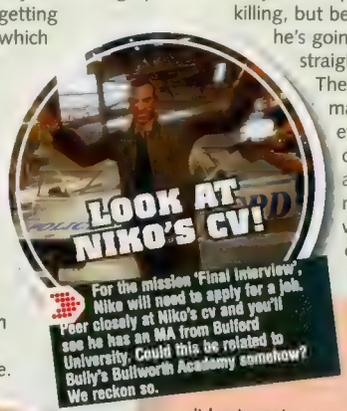
UNION DRIVE

BLACKMAILERS

This is possibly the toughest chase in the game, because the blackmailers can't be stopped and will flip cars over as you chase them. Once you've made it along the freeway – and don't worry about the cops who show up to tackle the blackmailers – they'll become vulnerable and eventually crash, letting you take them down as they dash through the park. Just don't go too nuts with the shooting, or you'll have to lose the cops before you finish the mission.

BUOYS AHOY

Inevitably, your picnic's going to go wrong, so when it does, just follow the enemy boat until it crashes. You can actually flank Dimitri's men by scrambling up the bank and getting behind them, which takes them by surprise and lets you shoot them in the bank. Get the one nearest the boats first, so that when the cops turn up you can hop in the boat with Bernie and flee.


LOOK AT NIKO'S CV!
For the mission 'Final Interview', Niko will need to apply for a job. Peer closely at Niko's cv and you'll see he has an MA from Bulford University. Could this be related to Bully's Bullworth Academy somehow? We reckon so.

SHOOT AN ADULT ENTERTAINMENT STAR IN THE CROTCH!
When a porn star says he's got 'something special' in his pants near the climax of the 'Do you have protection?' mission, cap him in between the legs and get ready to slither at the face he makes...

GERRY MCCREARY'S MISSIONS

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

This is another tailing mission, but unlike the last one the bad guys don't stop at red lights, so it's more important to stay with them than to keep your distance. When you get to their HQ, leave your car on the getaway spot, then trigger the bomb and finish off anyone left. Afterwards you'll have to evade the police which can be tricky because of the lack of places to go – stay on the straights until you find a place with a junction, then zigzag.

I NEED YOUR CLOTHES, YOUR BOOTS AND YOUR MOTORCYCLE

The bike you need is around the side of the house. Go and find the man you're supposed to be killing, but be aware that he's going to bolt straight away. There aren't too many preset events in this chase – although you need to be wary of buses coming out of the side streets – so the main thing is practising your power slides to get around corners fast. Dab the brakes coming in, then hit the handbrake as you go into the bend and accelerate out.

I'LL TAKE HER

Although you're technically supposed to drive your kidnappee towards the coast so she doesn't get nervous, it isn't really that important. As soon as you crash or do something crazy in the car, you'll spook her and you can get on with the kidnap. Don't go too fast – she'll grab the wheel or slap you, making you swerve, and if you're travelling at speed you'll collide with something and trash the car. Keep it steady and brake every time she goes nuts – after five or six, Niko will knock her unconscious, letting you tackle the freeway drive in peace. Just don't forget to pay the tolls.

SHE'S A KEEPER

You can't afford to switch cars in this mission because Grace'll die. Focus on avoiding the Ancellotis rather than shooting it out with them. As always, zigzagging is your friend – once they're all gone, just cruise on home.

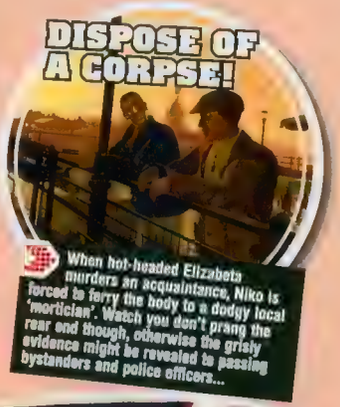
DIAMONDS ARE A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

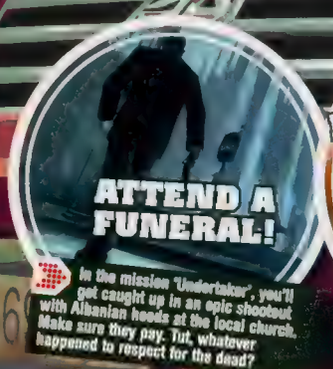
Another mission gone wrong – again, get straight to cover. Don't worry about Packie too much, but be aware that the walkways don't give you much cover – you'll need to stick close to the pipes if you want to avoid taking damage.

JIMMY PEGERINO

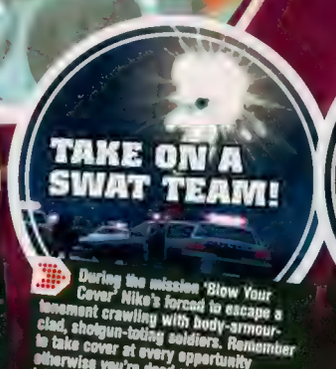
PEGORINO'S PRIDE

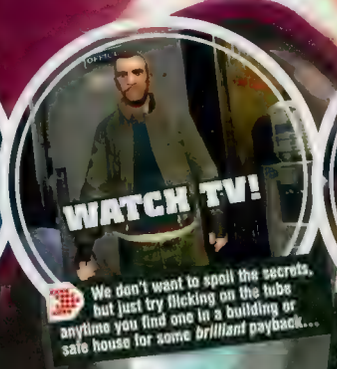
You'll want to wear a suit to get into this mission. The sniping's relatively easy – just start shooting as soon as the guys run in from the back. Keep your distance as much as possible as you make your way into the building, and shoot as many people as possible from as far away as possible – you can pop the lookouts on the stairway and in the window from miles away with the sniper rifle, saving you from making a dash across open ground. Once you get to the building, stay in cover and shoot as many people as you can

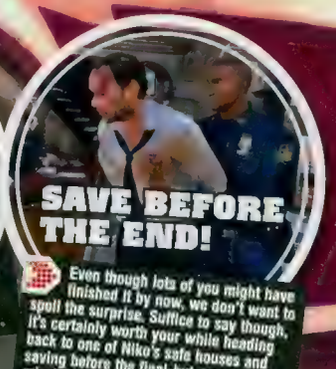

DISPOSE OF A CORPSE!
When hot-headed Elizabeta murders an acquaintance, Niko is forced to ferry the body to a dodgy local 'mortician'. Watch you don't prang the rear end though, otherwise the grisly evidence might be revealed to passing bystanders and police officers...

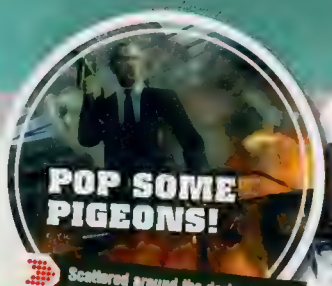

ATTEND A FUNERAL!
In the mission 'Undertaker', you'll get caught up in an epic shootout with Albanian heods at the local church. Make sure they pay. Tut, whatever happened to respect for the dead?

PULL AN EPIC WHEELIE!
Make a wheelie last longer than 500 feet (not an easy task – make sure you swipe a really quick bike and build up a fair lick of speed) and you'll unlock a special two-wheeled achievement... Yeehaa!


TAKE ON A SWAT TEAM!
During the mission 'Blow Your Cover' Niko's forced to escape a tenement crawling with body-armour-clad, shotgun-toting soldiers. Remember to take cover at every opportunity otherwise you're dead meat. Oh, and let no-one live!


WATCH TV!
We don't want to spoil the secrets, but just try flicking on the tube anytime you find one in a building or safe house for some brilliant payback...


SAVE BEFORE THE END!
Even though lots of you might have finished it by now, we don't want to spoil the surprise. Suffice to say though, it's certainly worth your while heading back to one of Niko's safe houses and saving before the final-but-one storyline mission. Otherwise, you might miss out on the multiple endings...



Scattered around the darkest recesses of Liberty City are 200 pigeons – or 'flying rats' who glow with a suspiciously red hue. Shoot 'em all up to unlock a special achievement. Tricky one this!

If you're ever lucky (or unfortunate, these guys are good!) to bump into a Rockstar dev online during a ranked multiplayer match, take them down to earn an achievement. These'll be rare as gold dust!

Although you're free to snap away and take piccies of the spectacular sights around Liberty City, certain missions demand you exercise your photography skills – like grabbing a good facial shot of kidnapped Grace Ancelotti for a ransom text...

before you go inside, paying special attention to the guys coming from the doorway on the right. Once you go a certain distance into the building you'll be told to get to Pegerino before he dies – run, because you've only got about 30 seconds to get to him. A bulletproof vest really helps out in this mission, because you don't want to be worrying about your own health. Then it's a simple car chase to clean up the final few guys.

FLATLINE

The important thing here is not to pull a gun – if you do, it's an instant two-star wanted level. Head for the ER and shoot Anthony's bodyguard, then Anthony. This makes the police arrive, but they'll leave their cars out front, so shoot a path through and grab a motor to get out. Low on health? There's a Sprunk machine in the lobby that you can use for top ups.

STORY MISSION
UNDERTAKER

This is a massive shootout at the church – keep an eye on Packie, and take cover behind the hearse as you roll grenades under the Albanians' cars. Shoot the dudes. When you get in the hearse to drive to the cemetery, don't drift around the corners or you'll lose the coffin.

GAMBETTI'S MISSIONS
ENTOURAGE

Find the gangsters and get in convoy – this opening bit's simple enough. When the shooting starts, get to cover straight away. Shoot all the gangsters from the alley, then jump in your car. Four cars will get on you when you hit the intersection, so drive straight at the lead one and veer around it to break out of the ambush. Then just zigzag through the streets until you're away. Try not to shoot too much, or you'll have the cops to worry about.

DINING OUT

No point messing around here: shoot the maître of the Korean restaurant (he's packing), then shoot the guys who come to investigate. Then shoot everyone else, being careful as you head up the stairs, and go through the kitchen to kill everyone else. As Fuk escapes, slide down the ladder (by holding Ⓧ) and sprint into the alley to blow up his car.

LIQUIDIZE THE ASSETS

When you get to the compound with the cocaine vans, climb over the fence to the right of the gate – now you can clamber up onto the walls. Wipe everyone out, but before you start blowing up the trucks, head around to the right and shoot the people who come out of the side door – otherwise they'll make a break for it in one of the vans, making you fail the mission. Once everyone's dead, conserve ammo by driving all the trucks into a group and leaving the forklift truck near them, then detonating the cylinder on it with a shot or two. This'll make everything go up like a bonfire.

Reckon you can whup your pals at *GTA IV*? Register your Gamertag or PSN name at www.rockstargames.com/socialclub and you'll be able to upload and compare your *GTA IV* statistics on a massive online database...

Whether it's chortling at a cameo from Juliette Lewis on WKTT Talk Radio or rocking out to Ruslana's 2004 Eurovision Song Contest-winning *Wild Dance* on Vladivostok FM, *GTA IV* is packing serious heat on the audio front.

During the mission 'Luck of the Irish' Niko needs to protect his Irish pal Packie McReary from gangsters using only a sniper rifle. Shoot to kill and don't be afraid to kill the guy in the ambulance – he's a baddie too...

Taking a cruise around the shores of the city is a real treat, but taking down an enemy chopper using a rocket launcher during a high-speed chase – like in the mission 'Babysitting' – is even better.

THE END IS NIGH

COMPLETE THE FINAL MISSIONS THE *GM* WAY...

Finally, Gambetti and Ray come good and Niko's great nemesis Darko is delivered into Liberty City airport. This isn't really a mission as such; more of a chance for Niko to either settle the score or be the bigger man and walk away. We chose to spare Darko, since he's a drug-addled, guilt-ridden wreck. Or you could just cap him in the head. Either way, that's it for this particular mission. And you thought Darko was going to be the final boss, didn't you?

Now Dimitri's on the phone; surprisingly, he wants to make pals! This is another crucial juncture for Niko – should he side with the traitor and bring home megabucks or opt for revenge and chase Dimitri down? So, choose your poison – whichever mission you opt for, there's going to be a crazy amount of shooting so make sure you're tooled up on both the ammo and armour fronts...

DO IT LIKE WE DID...

Head to the warehouse down at the docks, where just waltzing in with Phil Bell and grabbing the money doesn't exactly go according to plan. A huge warehouse shootout beckons, so pack full AK ammo and body armour. Then it's simply a case of taking your time, seeking cover at every opportunity and using manual zoomed aim to gradually pick your foes off one by one.

After about 50 are dead, you should have worked your way up to the office at the top of the warehouse interior. Drat, some punk is making off with the proceeds! Leg it down to the floor, snag that van waiting outside and chase the thieves. Be careful not to let them get too far ahead or you'll have to restart the mission. Once you've caught them, it's mission completed...

A DISH BEST SERVED COLD

But you don't want to do that, do you? Nah, revenge is much sweeter so it's off to Dimitri's tanker to finally flush the traitor out. This ship is literally crawling with machine-gun and shotgun-toting grunts, so take advantage of the crane that's located right next to the boarding plank. Take down the nearest guards from above with your AK, before switching to sniper rifle and eliminating every enemy in sight.

Once you're on the ship tread carefully; it's not uncommon to let a foe slip through the net and if they catch you unawares Niko's history. Work your way through to the bridge, before activating the opening of the bow doors. This'll trigger another wave of baddies, so remember to seek cover and – above all – take your time.

After you've reached the interior of the hull, wipe out the goons protecting Dimitri before taking him down with grenades from cover. Dimitri can take a lot of punishment, so be careful. After he's been incapacitated, enjoy the sweet satisfaction of kneecapping him before popping a cap in his sorry head.

FINALE

Now paranoid mentalist Jimmy Pegerino decides he wants Niko dead after the Dimitri debacle. Niko feels likewise, so he, Little Jacob and Packie tear across Liberty City to dish out a final dose of justice. Pegerino's hauled up inside an abandoned pier building, but instead of going for a direct all-out assault, slip around the back by the pier and up onto the roof via a handy ladder. Pick all the goons off from your handy vantage point with your AK, before dropping down onto floor level and clearing out the rest of the building by nipping in through the now unguarded front door. Pegerino's makes a break for it, so chase him down the pier – taking out any stragglers.

He's got a boat so snag the nearby trial bike and hare down the beach in hot pursuit. After a few minutes, you'll see a ramp pointing out to sea. Gun it and tear off the ramp – Niko will grab hold of a handy chopper piloted by his pals. Suspend your disbelief because this next bit is tricky. Your mates tell you to stay low to Pegerino as you tail him, but since he's blasting rockets that means less dodging time – so keep nice and high so you've got ample time to move. After a period of sustained pelting with your minigun, Pegerino's mashed up boat docks at Happiness Island where Niko finally has the chance to end his particular Liberty City story. Sadly, for Niko, it'll come at a hefty personal price.

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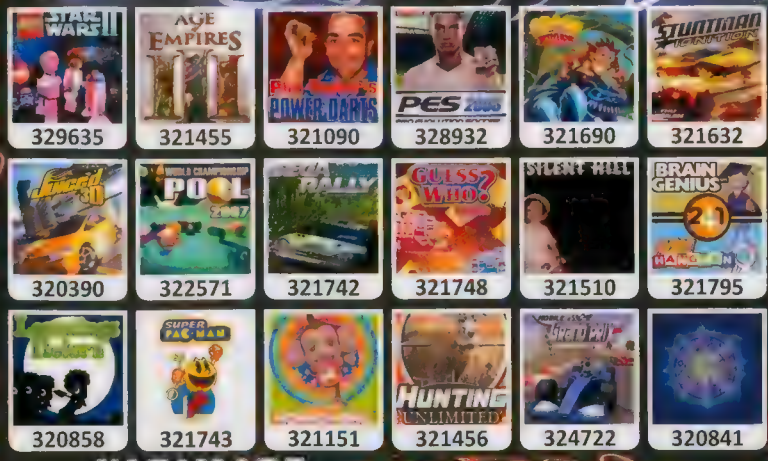

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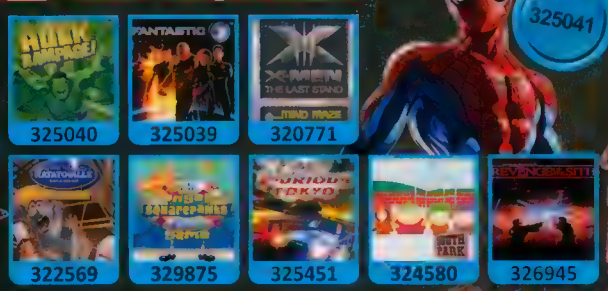

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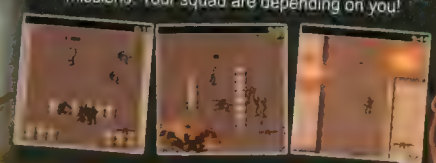

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B) RAYMOND
C) BERNARD

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But don't book that fat camp holiday just yet, because Nintendo have supplied us with five Wiis and five copies of *Wii Fit* to give away to five lucky readers. Scoring 83% last issue *Wii Fit*, complete with Balance Board, is a fun first step towards a healthier lifestyle and a jiggle free physique. There are loads of minigames/stretches in *Wii Fit* to play/be suffered on it, all with the aim of helping you to fight the flab.

To be in with a chance just use the squishy bit between your ears to try and answer the following question.

Physical inactivity can increase the risk of which killer disease?

(a) Heart disease
(b) Carpal tunnel syndrome
(c) The Ebola virus

Entries must arrive by 4 June 2008 at the latest.

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Dark Sector voice actor Michael Rosenbaum is most famous for his role as... PS3

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- ☐ Carpel tunnel syndrome
- ☐ The Ebola virus

GRAN TURISMO 5: PROLOGUE (PS3)

Which of these names has nothing to do with Japanese car manufacturer Nissen?

- ☐ Isuzu
- ☐ Datsun
- ☐ Infiniti

ASSASSIN'S CREED: ALTAÏR'S CHRONICLES (DS)

What is Altaïr known as outside of the Animus?

- ☐ Desmond
- ☐ Raymond
- ☐ Bernard

IRON MAN (360)

When did Iron Man first appear in comic books?

- ☐ 1963
- ☐ 1983
- ☐ 2003

DARK SECTOR (PS3)

Dark Sector voice actor Michael Rosenbaum is most famous for his role as...

- ☐ Doctor Doom
- ☐ The Joker
- ☐ Lex Luther

THE WORLD ENDS WITH YOU (DS)

Which district of Tokyo is *The World Ends With You* primarily set in?

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What do you want to see in the next *GM*?

Vote for which poster you want on your wall:

❑ GTA IV ❑ Metal Gear Solid 4 ❑ Haze

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Let us know by sending your form to: My Next Month, *GamesMaster*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.
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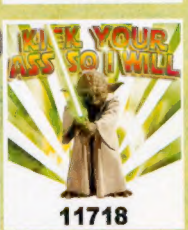

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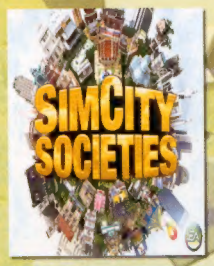

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